

# RuneQuest

*Price of Honour*





# RuneQuest

## Price of Honour

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### Contents

Introduction	2
The Fall of Ryo	8
Intrigue in Miykao	21
Fragile Loyalties	31
Conflicts of Faith	40
The Blade of Water	49
Blades of Earth & Fire	62
The Blade of Wind	74
The Sorcerer	86
The Battle of Ryo	95
Appendix I	106
Appendix II	115
Index	120

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# INTRODUCTION

*'There is surely nothing other than the single purpose of the present moment. A man's own life is a succession of moment after moment.'*

*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo*

## Japan, 999 A.D.

Emperor Ichij rules Japan and the Imperial Court is dominated by the Fujiwara clan. The power base that they have slowly built over the last two centuries is now being threatened by two rival clans, the Minamoto and the Taira. These two ambitious clans have gained much standing in the Imperial Court and their influence continues to grow.

In the midst of this political conflict, the bakemono Lord Enezga has seized several territories in Iwami province. Both Minamoto and Taira have lost lands and resources to this invasion and in an unexpected move; they have formed an alliance to drive Enezga's forces from their lands.

The ranks of Enezga's army have grown at an astonishing rate and to make matters worse, the infamous sorcerer, Sushigawa, has also joined Enezga. Sushigawa presented Enezga with the fabled Sword of Seven Cuts, which the bakemono lord has used to slay local kami and defile Buddhist temples.

If Enezga can be defeated, then both the Minamoto and Taira will gain significant standing and influence in the Imperial Court for such a victory. Minamoto and Taira now face a war on two fronts, for not only must they defeat the invading army in Iwami province but they also play a deadly game of politics in the Imperial Court against the Fujiwara clan.

## Player Characters

When the campaign begins, the players are in the port town of Ryo in Iwami province. They must all come from the Minamoto and Taira clans or any clans allied with them. Remember that although the clan rivalry has been put on hold, it still

exists below the surface. If you like a lot of friction and conflict in your games then this can make for some interesting roleplaying. If you prefer your party to be on friendlier terms then they can all be allied to the same clan.

One other thing to consider when determining their clans is that the players will be reporting to a Minamoto commander and will start off in a Minamoto town. They will meet and travel with people from the Taira clan but most of the story revolves around Minamoto characters.

## Professions

*Price of Honour* takes place during a war, so obviously Bushi characters are best suited to this campaign. Military characters will be stationed in Ryo but non-military professions will need an appropriate reason as to why they are here and also why they will stay with the group.

## Samurai

The most popular choice of profession will be samurai, the elite warriors who serve their lords and follow strict codes of honour.

## Ashigaru

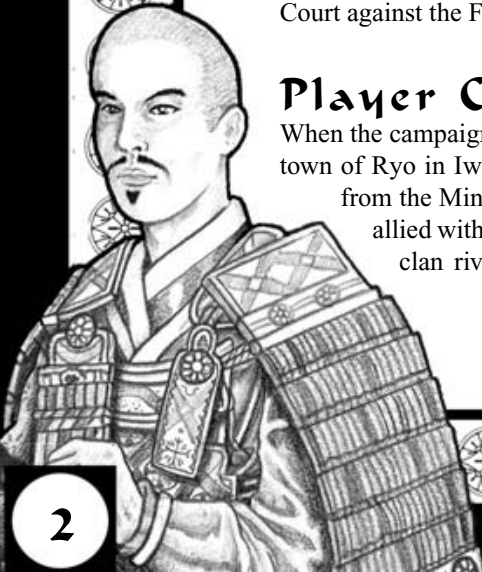
Although the common foot soldiers are not as revered as the other fighting professions, playing an ashigaru aspiring to become a samurai can be a rewarding and interesting experience.

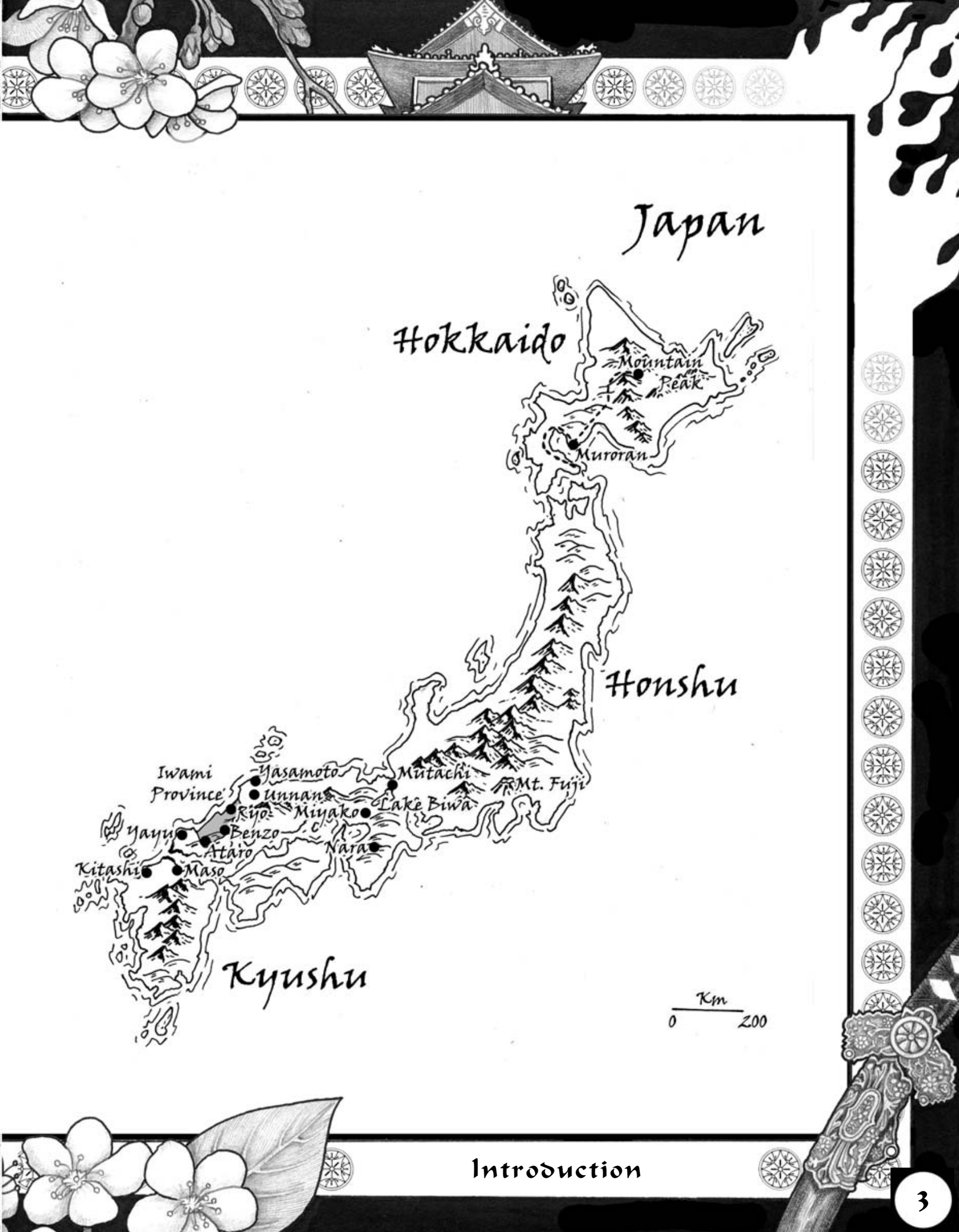
## Sōhei/Yamabushi

The Buddhist and Shinto priests are not directly involved in the war at this time so warrior monks are not a common sight amongst the troops. However, with a good enough reason and background you can allow this profession to join the party.

## Other Professions

You may allow other professions as required but remember to give them a reason to be there and to follow the fighters as they are sent on dangerous





# Japan

Hokkaido

Mountain Peak

Murotan

Honshu

Iwami Province

Yasamoto

Mitachi

Mt. Fuji

Utsunomiya

Miyako

Lake Biwa

Yayoi

Benzo

Nara

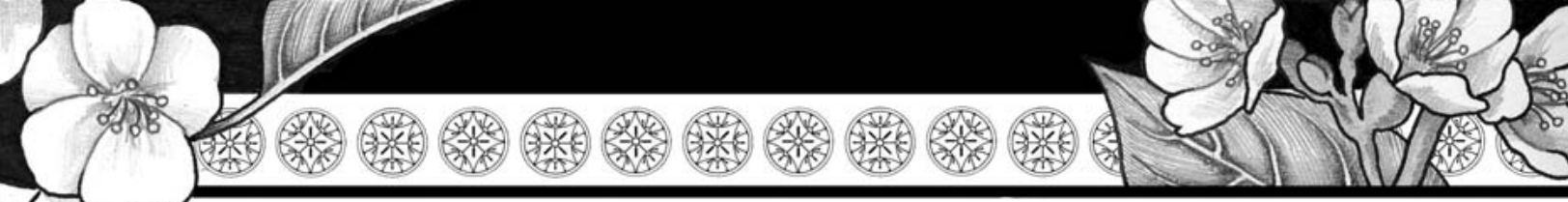
Kitashi

Maso

Kyushu

Km  
0 200

## Introduction



missions. Such professions might include a daishonin (scribe), isha (healer) and perhaps even a gaikoukan (diplomat).

Reasons for including some of these professions include service to a lord or perhaps the character owes a debt to one of the other players. Try to be inventive but realistic. Such hooks can provide additional story arcs for each of the players involved.

### **Caste and Class**

Other important aspects to consider for each of the players are their caste and class. Will they all be equals or will some rank above others? If you have a mix of characters from both the Minamoto and Taira clans, different social backgrounds can add additional animosity between the players.

### **Adding Players and NPCs**

There may be times during the campaign when you need to add a new player or NPC to the party. This might be due to a character death or you simply need a bigger party to face the dangers ahead of them.

There are several opportunities in the story where you can easily bring in new characters but failing that Hirozaki can always assign new Bushi characters to the party as required.

### **The Protagonists**

The following Non-Player Characters are key people in the story and the players will meet them on several occasions. Statistics for these characters can be found in Appendix I.

#### **Minamoto no Hirozaki**

Minamoto no Hirozaki is the most honoured samurai in the Minamoto clan and has become a good and trusted friend of the daimyo, Minamoto no Toshiro. Hirozaki is 27 years old and has served Toshiro with distinction for the last 10 years. He began his service as an ashigaru but rose up through the ranks and has been a commander in the Minamoto army for three years. He is a formidable warrior and a cunning tactician.

Since the war has broken out, Hirozaki has become the commander of the entire Minamoto army and commands his forces from Unnan, situated just east of Iwami province. Unnan is far enough from the war zone to reduce the risk of attack and close enough that reinforcements can be dispatched when required.

Hirozaki primarily commands those from his clan but the nature of the Minamoto and Taira alliance means that he is in a position to give orders to anyone within the alliance.

The players will report to Hirozaki during their first mission and continue to do so for the remainder of the campaign. Hirozaki is a key character not just for the players but for the war against Enezga.

#### **Natsui**

Natsui is the zasu (abbot) of the Horyu-ji temple complex at Nara. Natsui has done much in the way of humanitarian aid since Enezga attacked Iwami province but beyond that he does not want the sōhei embroiled in a war – they exist to protect the temples, not to fight in wars.

The players will meet him later on and he will be their main point of contact while they quest for a set of magical items needed to defeat Sushigawa.

#### **Minamoto Kanamuchi**

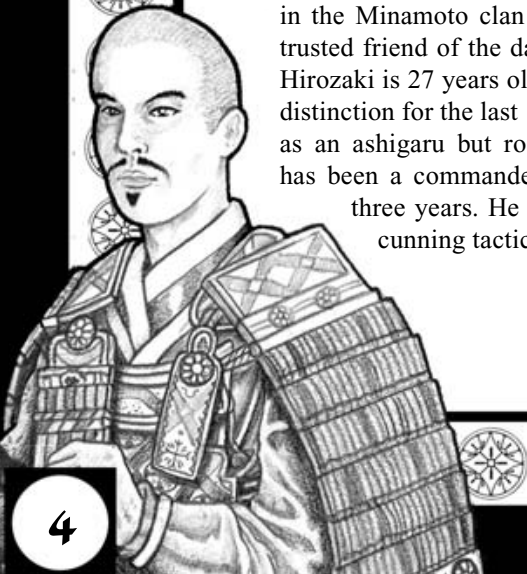
Minamoto Kanamuchi is the captain of the *Sui Tatsu*. His ship and crew are everything to him. He pushes them hard but ensures that they are well looked after. The party will be requiring his ship and services several times during the campaign.


### **The Antagonists**

The motives of Sushigawa and Enezga are detailed here to give you an understanding of their role in this campaign. Statistics for these characters can be found in Appendix I.

#### **Sushigawa**

Sushigawa was born to the family of Asai of the Minamoto clan. As a scholar he soon became interested in the ways of sorcery and sought their knowledge.





He left his family and clan behind at the age of 20 and trained under a mentor by the name of Dosan. He discovered that he had natural talent for the art and soon surpassed his master. Sushigawa left his mentor behind to seek a greater understanding.

Seven years after he left his family, he returned in the hope of proving that sorcery was not something to be feared but to be embraced. His mastery of magic could benefit both his family and his clan but they did not understand. His family turned on him and their betrayal resulted in the death of eight family members including several samurai.

Sushigawa fled Honshu and found shelter with the Ainu on the island of Hokkaido. The betrayal by his family had created a killer and unlocked a terrible darkness inside him. As he nurtured hatred for his people, he vowed to return to Honshu and show them the full power of what he could do.

During his time in Hokkaido he amassed quite a fortune through his cunning and guile. It is this money that largely funds the Ainu mercenaries that join Enezga's forces shortly after the campaign begins.

When Sushigawa joins Enezga, the sorcerer has few resources other than the money that he brought back from Hokkaido. As the story progresses he slowly builds up a small settlement in Kyushu and employs a number of ninjas to serve as protectors and agents to carry out his plans.

### **Enezga**

Bakemono have always acted in small groups, lead by the dai bakemono. They seek material wealth even though much of what they acquire is of little use to them. This is how it has been for centuries but recently the clans in Iwami province have organised hunting parties and many bakemono have been killed.

Enezga was one of the few that survived these attacks but unlike other bakemono who fled their aggressors his band stood their ground and defeated the samurai attackers. Enezga is a clever creature and he knew that more humans would come. He organised his band to defend their den and took in the orphaned bakemono who had lost their leaders.

His band began to grow and they fought off many hunting parties. As word spread of his deeds, other dai bakemono wanted to join his band and fight the human clans. As Enezga's army grew, he eventually took the fight to the clans. After several large scale assaults on towns and settlements, the war had begun.

Hearing news of the bakemono uprising, Sushigawa knew this was the opportunity that he had been waiting for and set sail for the Iwami province where Enezga was building his army. Presenting Enezga with the Sword of Seven Cuts, Sushigawa was welcomed and a new alliance was formed.

## **Campaign Overview**

Each chapter is self contained but forms part of the larger story as the war progresses in Iwami province. A chapter will usually consist of a number of related events and missions from the PC's superior.

There is usually a span of several months between each chapter. During these periods the players will still be obeying orders from their superiors but they will also have time to train. You can also run additional scenarios if you wish.

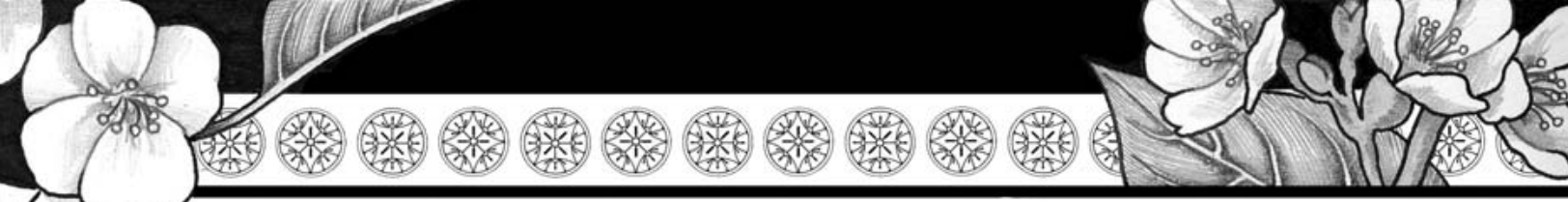
To give you an understanding of the story, a brief outline of each chapter is given below.

### **The Fall of Ryo**

The story begins with the players stationed in the coastal town of Ryo. The action begins straight away when a horde of bakemono attack. It is a tough battle but the defences hold. Fortune takes a turn for the worse when a force of Ainu mercenaries attack from the sea.

The players are ordered to break out of the besieged town and head to Unnan. Once there, they are to deliver important dispatches and request that reinforcements are sent to Ryo. The party gets delayed and the messages are stolen. By the time the players get to Unnan they are too late, Ryo has fallen to the enemy.

The commander of Ryo was captured and Sushigawa tortures him for the military strategies he possesses. In an effort to redeem themselves, the players head back



to Ryo and attempt to rescue the commander before Sushigawa learns the Minamoto secrets.

### **Intrigue in Miyako**

After several months of escort duty the players are charged with escorting the noble Taira Kiyoshi to the capital city of Miyako. On the way they are ambushed and Kiyoshi's guards are killed. Suspecting treachery, the players are now the only people Kiyoshi can trust.

Kiyoshi has documents that prove the Fujiwara have been hindering the war effort and in doing so have allowed Enezga to gain a stronger foothold. The Fujiwara want Kiyoshi dead and the documents destroyed. The ambush suggests that they have an informant in the clan alliance.

The party arrives at Kiyoshi's estate where they must protect him and find out who has betrayed them. As the conspiracy unravels the players expose the traitor Eizo but Kiyoshi's heritage is also revealed and a stalemate results.

### **Fragile Loyalties**

The fight does not go well, Enezga's army grows as more Ainu join his forces. If Enezga lost his mercenaries, it would force him to pause and reconsider his next move. This would buy some time for the clans to regroup and mount an offensive.

The mercenaries fight only for money and that is their weakness. The players must investigate the movement of money in Enezga's supply lines and cut off the financial support. Without their pay, the Ainu will soon abandon these lands.

Investigations eventually lead the players to the fishing village of Yayu, where a clan secretly works for Sushigawa to guard and deliver the Ainu funds. The party also discover that Eizo is here and a reckoning is at hand

### **Conflicts of Faith**

During a religious festival, a force of bakemono attack the temples. The players help to fight them off but many lives are lost. Using this tragic event to his advantage, Hirozaki sends the

players on a diplomatic mission to Nara in the hope of gaining the support of the priests and their sōhei.

The party meet Natsui who explains that there are rising hostilities between the Shingo and Tendai sects of Buddhism. Until the conflict is resolved, the sōhei must remain to defend the temples. The players travel to Enryaku-ji at Mount Hiei to speak with the Tendai sect where they discover that Sushigawa has manipulated the situation to prevent the sōhei from getting involved in the war.

The hold Sushigawa has on the Tendai can only be broken if he is defeated. Natsui tells the players about the Legend of the Elemental Blades. If these five magical weapons could be found the players could confront the sorcerer. The players discover the custodian of the Blade of Heaven in Nara. With proof that the legend is true, Hirozaki sends them on a quest to find the remaining four blades.

### **The Blade of Water**

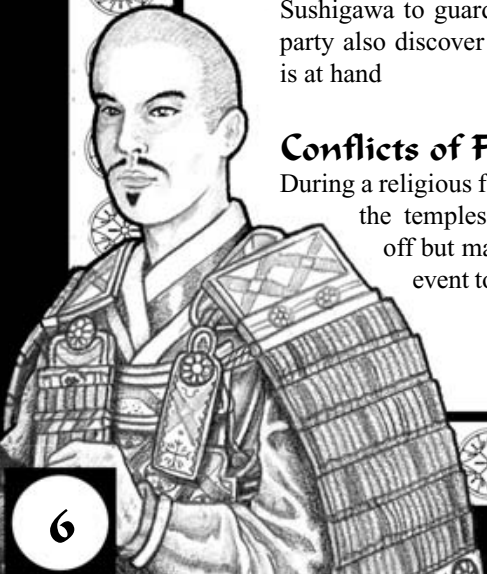
The party head to the fishing town of Mutachi on the shore of lake Shinko. It is their hope that local legends will speak of the Blade of Water. However, upon their arrival they discover that a group of ronin and Ainu have occupied the town.


The players must free the town before they can continue their quest. Once successful, they will be told a local legend that says the sword rests in the vast lake. They must now petition a local kami to reveal the exact location but their efforts are hindered once more. There is a mukade in the area which the players must defeat before the kami can be safely contacted.

The blade has been buried under a lake and must be repaired before it can be used. The party travel to Benzo, a village famous for its sword smiths, to restore the sword. Their arrival is followed by a bakemono attack and the players must defend the settlement against impossible odds.

### **Blades of Earth & Fire**

The players head to Mount Fuji. Once there they visit the surrounding villages to hear the local myths and legends about the two blades supposedly hidden nearby. They hear a number of tales and deduce that a





sorcerer, known as The Summoner, terrorises the local villages with his demons.

The party must climb the mountain and find The Summoner's secret lair. Once inside they must fight his demons and other evil servants before they can recover the swords.

### **The Blade of Wind**

The party sets sail for Hokkaido. As they near their destination they pick up an Ainu survivor from a shipwreck and it is not long before they discover what destroyed the Ainu's ship. A giant octopus that roams the southern peninsula of Hokkaido attacks the party's ship and destroys it, killing most of the crew.

The players and a few other survivors make it to the mainland. The Ainu that they rescued guides them across the island to their destination. After a long and arduous journey they climb a mountain where they find the final resting place of the warrior and recover the Blade of Wind.

The party manages to secure passage on an Ainu ship to take them to Honshu. However, they are betrayed and taken prisoner. The players must now escape their captors before they are delivered to Enezga.

### **The Sorcerer**

Now in possession of the Elemental Blades, the players have a chance to defeat Sushigawa. The party receive word that Sushigawa is due to arrive at Ryo and they set an ambush. However, the party was tricked by Enezga and they are captured.

Fearing the worst, the players are surprised when Enezga informs them that he also wants the sorcerer dead and gives the party the information that they will need in order to find Sushigawa's ninja settlement.

The party journeys to Kyushu where they investigate several villages on the coast. They must discover which one is the secret hideout for Sushigawa and his ninjas. Once they locate their target, the players must defeat the ninjas before finally confronting the sorcerer in a deadly battle.

### **The Battle of Ryo**

The final battle to free Iwami province. With the mercenaries gone and Sushigawa defeated, Enezga has been weakened and the clans must press their advantage. The outcome is uncertain but it is the best chance that they have.

However, the Fujiwara clan intend to steal the glory by sending their own forces in to turn the tide of battle. This would prevent the allied clans from gaining any political advantage from the victory. With the aid of the Fujiwara the battle will be won but the political war will be lost.

Without Sushigawa maintaining the rift between the Tendai and Shingo sects, the players can now petition them to allow the sōhei to support the clans in this final battle. Can the players get the Sōhei reinforcements in time and join one of the greatest battles in Japan's history?

### **Appendices**

The two appendices are provided for easy reference. Appendix I lists statistics for NPCs that are encountered several times during the campaign, including named characters, bakemono, mercenaries and Bushi.

Appendix II lists a number of random encounters that can be used throughout the campaign as the players travel across Japan. These are grouped by friendly territory, enemy territory and encounters at sea.



# THE FALL OF RYO

*'There is a rhythm to everything but particularly in the martial arts, if you do not train in its rhythm it is difficult to succeed... You should discriminate thoroughly between the rhythm of success and the rhythm of failure.'*

*The Book of Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi*

Our story starts with the players stationed in the coastal town of Ryo. Ryo is one of the main ports for Iwami province making it a hub for trade and commerce. Ryo is also a popular fishing town, providing fish to many settlements in the area.

Ryo has a population of 8,000. Most of its inhabitants live in modest houses but there is a rich quarter where the governor, magistrates and several rich merchants live a more extravagant lifestyle. Marking the boundary of the rich quarter are several pagodas that serve as the town hall and other municipal buildings.

A Shinto shrine marks the centre of the town. Next to this is the market, which leads to the harbour on the western side. Opposite the market are warehouses used by both merchants and fishermen.

## Military Defences

From a military perspective, Ryo is a key tactical position and a garrison has been stationed here to defend against bakemono attacks. Wooden palisades surround the main town with main gates to the east and west and smaller gates to the north and south.

Due to the amount of soldiers, several rudimentary barracks have been built for the ashigaru. Most of the Samurai and Bushi have taken up residence in the houses nearby. The town hall now serves as the military headquarters.

Although the presence of the military has created some disturbance for this once peaceful town, the people of Ryo have welcomed the soldiers knowing that they are here to protect them from the bakemono.

The players will be stationed here under the command of Minamoto Chogen who

is commander of the garrison (see page 10 for his statistics). Any non-military Player Characters will also have their reasons for being here as outlined in the introduction.

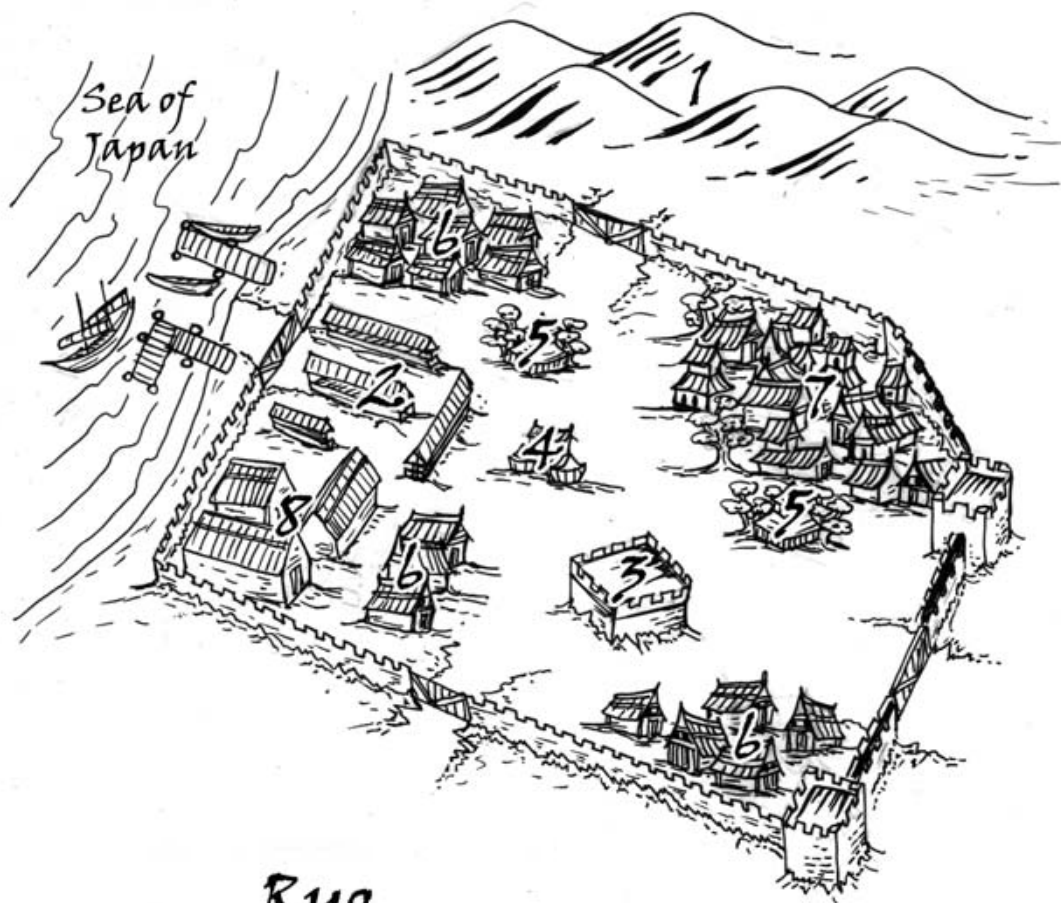
## Besieged

Once the players have been familiarised with the town of Ryo, we jump straight into the action with a night time attack from Enezga's forces. When you are ready, read the following out loud:

*You are standing watch as a small fire takes the chill from the night air. It will be light soon and you look forward to a few hours of sleep. Looking out from the watchtower you see something moving in the darkness. It is difficult to make out, at first but as your eyes adjust you can see a band of bakemono. You quickly look around and notice more and more of them approaching from all directions.*

The party will only have a few rounds to react before the bakemono begin their assault. They will hopefully sound the alert and as they do so, similar cries can be heard from the other tower.





Sea of  
Japan

Ryo



### Key

1. Hills
2. Marketplace
3. Head Quarters
4. Shrine
5. Tea House
6. Houses
7. Rich Quarter
8. Warehouses



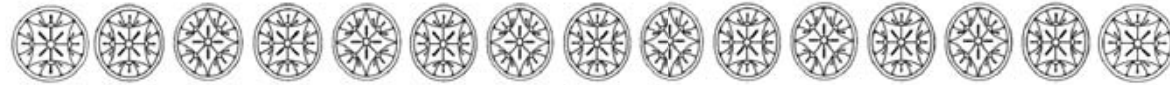


## Minamoto Chogen

Chogen is an intelligent man who commands great respect from those who serve under him. He is an expert swordsman and rarely uses a bow.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	14	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20) 5/6
CON	14	Damage Bonus: +1D2	L. Arm (16-18) 2/5
DEX	18	Magic Points 13	R. Arm (13-15) 2/5
SIZ	14	Strike Rank: +17	Chest (10-12) 5/8
INT	17	On: 81	Abdomen (07-09) 5/7
POW	13	—	L. Leg (04-06) 2/6
CHA	14	—	R. Leg (01-03) 2/6

*Basic Skills:* Acrobatics 43%, Athletics 47%, Courtesy 51%, Dodge 52%, Influence 39%, Perception 40%, Persistence 33%, Resilience 42%, Riding 35%  
*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 67%, Lore (Iwami province) 34% Oratory 57%  
*Combat:* Katana 68% 1D10+1+1D2  
*Armour:* Full Yoroi suit (Penalties have been factored into above skills)



*The horde of bakemono let forth a curious war cry as they begin their charge. The garrison quickly scrambles into action as Chogen orders the men into position. Bakemono clamber over each other to scale the barricades and in an instant the battle has begun.*

The assault will be relentless and all fighters will be rotated between the front and back lines to allow them a little rest. The townsfolk will carry the wounded and tend to them but other than that they will stay away from the fighting. Statistics for the bakemono can be found in Appendix I.

The bakemono will climb the walls, towers and each other to get inside the town. As the battle progresses, soldiers and Samurai will relieve the Player Characters from the towers and Chogen will make them into one of several roaming units giving them a more active role in the battle – they must be ready to react to any situation and deal with it accordingly. Pick or roll on the following table for battle events they must deal with:

1D6 Roll	Event
1	Fire Starters
2	Fire in the Fort
3-4	Bolster the Defences
5	Breach
6	Enemy in the Gates

### Fire Starters

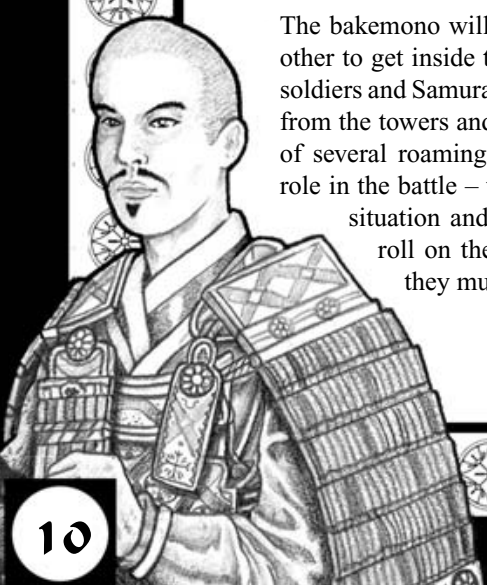
Some bakemono try to set fire to part of the barricade or watchtower. The players must prevent this or a fire will start.

### Fire in the Fort

A fire has broken out, the townsfolk rush over with buckets of water but they must be protected from the bakemono who will surely slaughter them if given the opportunity.


### Bolster the Defences

On a successful Perception roll, the party notice a weak spot in the defences and must take position until they



## The Fall of Ryo





are replaced. If they fail the Perception roll a breach will occur as described below.

### Breach

A dai bakemono and his band have breached the defences. The party must fight them back before they gain too much ground and allow others to break through.

### Enemy in the Gates

A small band of bakemono have broken past the defensive lines and are running amok. Some attack unwary Bushi from behind whilst others hunt down innocent townsfolk.

### Arrival of the Ainu

After an hour or so of fighting, the defenders will be holding their ground and with the amount of dead bakemono they will assume that the enemy is sure to retreat. However, unknown to them Sushigawa has hired Ainu mercenaries to bolster Enezga's army and a consignment of them is about to arrive in the harbour and launch a surprise attack from the rear. At an appropriate point, read the following.

*As dawn approaches the bakemono retreat, leaving a sea of carnage and corpses. When they are out of range of your archers, they stop their retreat and make camp. Behind the bakemono camps you can just make out their leader, the infamous Enezga. Ryo is now besieged and as you stop to catch your breath, a fisherman runs up to you and informs you that ships are approaching the harbour.*

*Heading to the docks to get a better view, you see two large ships entering the harbour. You look at the crew and see they are Ainu; the barbarians from the north. The glint of sun on steel confirms your fears, that these men are armed for war.*

Once Chogen has been informed, he will order men to take defensive positions at the west wall and the gates will be closed. Although the bakemono have retreated, men are still left guarding the walls in case they attack once more. It is not long before the fighting begins again as the Ainu attack. Use statistics for the Ainu Soldiers as detailed in Appendix I.

### The Ainu

The Ainu are ferocious warriors. Their favoured weapons are the scimitar and the short bow. The Ainu tend to be lightly armoured, wearing animal hides and thick leathers.

There are three types of Ainu in this campaign. The Ainu Soldiers make up the bulk of their fighting force, whilst the Ainu Warriors tend to be used more for patrol or guard duty. Each group of mercenaries is lead by an Ainu Captain. Statistics for all of these can be found in Appendix I.

After the players have fought some of the Ainu, Chogen will call them to him.

*'Your little group seems quite effective and I have a mission for you. These Ainu would appear to be mercenaries employed by Enezga. I have now determined his strategy. The bakemono attack by night and the Ainu attack by day giving us no chance to rest and recuperate. They will soon tire us out and Ryo will fall.*

*'We need reinforcements and I have important information for Minamoto no Hirozaki. Take these dispatches to Hirozaki with haste. You must find a way out of Ryo and head to Unnan as quickly as possible.'*

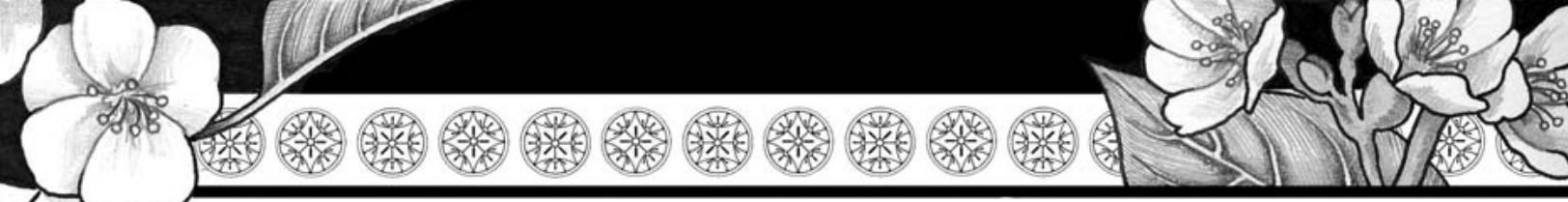
If the players read the message you can give them the handout on page 13. The other dispatches are sealed and contain details on troop movements, strategies and information vital to the war effort.

### Escape

The party can get to Unnan by the end of the day on horseback, so in order for reinforcements to arrive in time the party must leave as soon as possible. They



## The Fall of Ryo



need to devise a plan to escape unnoticed. If they struggle with this, Chogen will make a few suggestions and observations as listed below. He will also answer any questions as required.

- ♣ Unnan is east of here and the journey is just under a day's ride.
- ♣ Horses will be provided for anyone who does not currently have one.
- ♣ The weakest bakemono forces are to the north. Due to the terrain it is difficult to mount an attack from that direction.
- ♣ Simply riding out would most likely end in death.
- ♣ A diversionary tactic might aid their escape.
- ♣ Once past the bakemono forces, there could be additional bands of them hiding out.

### Diversionsary Attack

There are a variety of escape plans that the players could devise but they will all be of a similar nature. The best and most obvious method is for a small force of fighters to engage the bakemono in the north and during the conflict and chaos the party ride out to safety. Once past the bakemono army, they can head west towards Unnan.

The diversionary force will only be a small band due to the fact that most of the fighters are still engaged with the Ainu and others are needed to defend the town in case the bakemono see a weakness and attack.

When the players are ready, read out the following. If they have adopted a different plan adapt it as necessary.

*The gates are opened and the soldiers, led by several Samurai, charge out and engage the bakemono. The bakemono, obviously surprised by this move, are slow to organise themselves and many are cut down. However, the attacking force is outnumbered and they will not hold their position for long. Archers lay down covering fire and Chogen gives you the order to ride out.*

Chogen's forces have broken through most of the bakemono lines, giving the players an almost clear run to safety. However, as soon as they ride out, many of the bakemono will take a swing at both horse

and rider. Riding through a battle is not easy and riding rolls will be required.

As they near the back of the bakemono lines, the players will have to fight their way through the rear line of defence. Once they clear enemy lines, read out the following:

*As you break through the last of the enemy forces, you take a quick glance behind. Only one Samurai remains from the attacking force and he is surrounded by bakemono. His fate certain, you look forward and spur your mounts on towards Unnan.*

### Detour

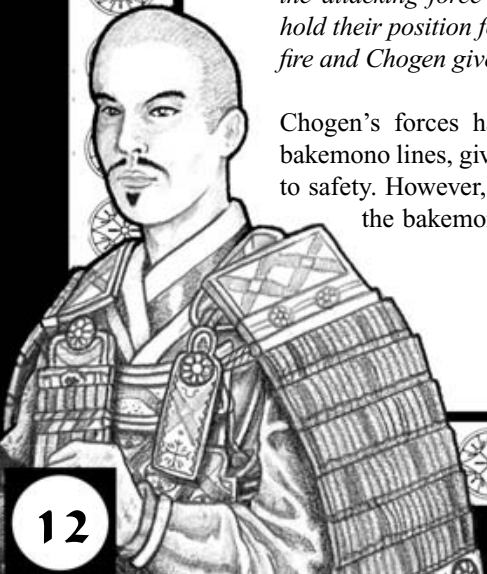
The Fujiwara see the alliance of Minamoto and Taira as a threat to their power base in the Imperial Court and plot to turn the war to their advantage. If the allied clans suffer enough defeats and lose control of the situation, it will weaken their standing rather than improve it.

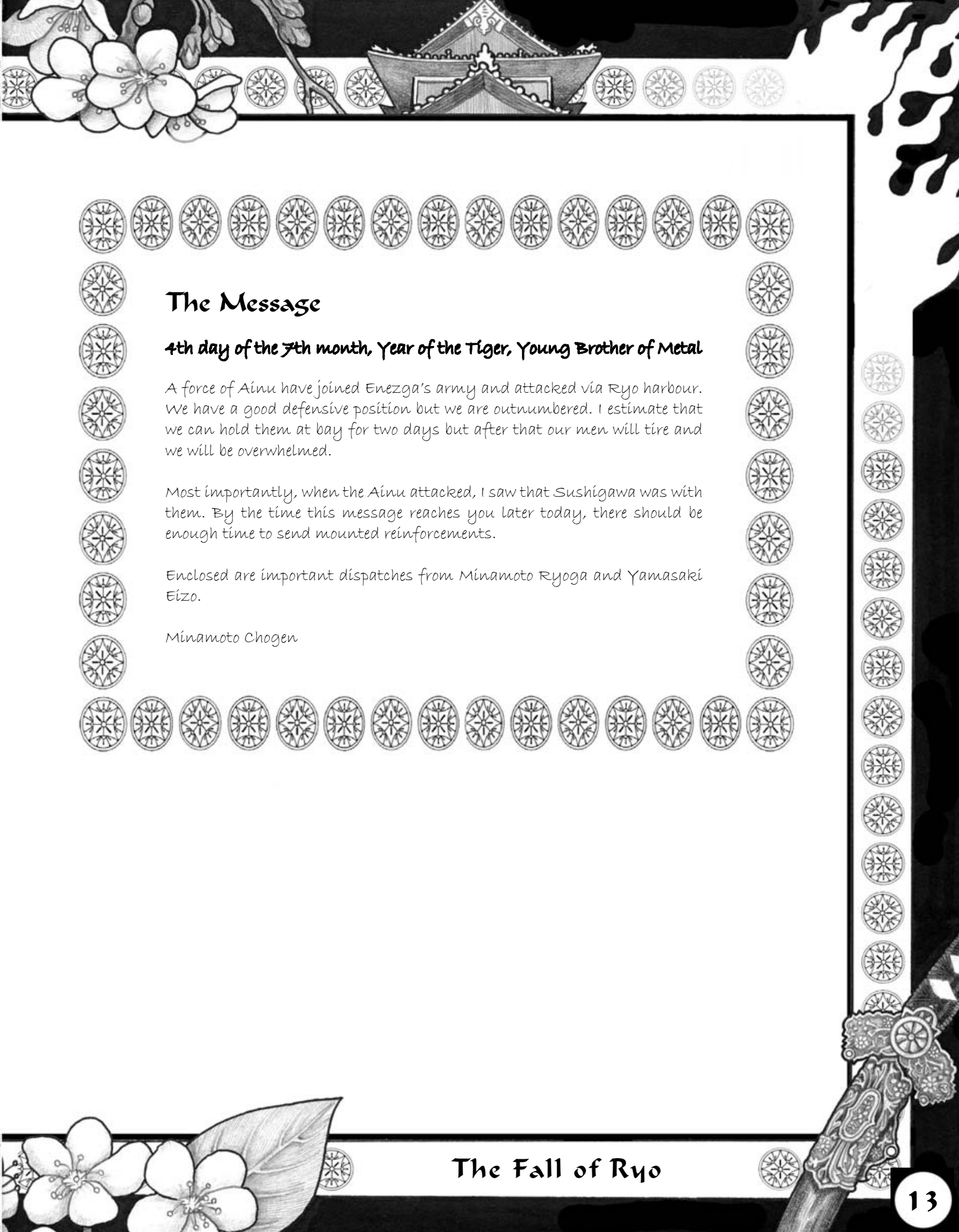
Acting in secret, several Dainagon (Ministers of State) have taken the dishonourable decision to hinder the efforts of the Minamoto and Taira. To this end, several agents have been sent to intercept important dispatches sent between command posts. Without these communiqués, their war against Enezga will be hampered. The ultimate plan of the Fujiwara is to send in their own forces at a crucial point and claim the victory for themselves. More on this plot will be revealed in the next chapter.

### Random Encounters

The players will have a number of encounters on the way to Unnan. Several of these encounters will reveal that there are bands of bakemono raiding the area for supplies for Enezga's army. Pick or roll for random encounters as detailed in Appendix II.

Most of these encounters will delay the players, so they must decide whether or not to deal with the situation and delay their arrival at Unnan or continue their journey and most likely (depending on the encounter) let innocent people die.





## The Message

**4th day of the 7th month, Year of the Tiger, Young Brother of Metal**

A force of Ainu have joined Enezga's army and attacked via Ryo harbour. We have a good defensive position but we are outnumbered. I estimate that we can hold them at bay for two days but after that our men will tire and we will be overwhelmed.

Most importantly, when the Ainu attacked, I saw that Sushigawa was with them. By the time this message reaches you later today, there should be enough time to send mounted reinforcements.

Enclosed are important dispatches from Minamoto Ryoga and Yamasaki Eizo.

Minamoto Chogen

## Making Camp

As dusk approaches it begins to rain and it is time for the party to make camp. It has been a long day and they will be exhausted, most of them have probably not slept in the last 24 hours and most of that time has been spent fighting or on the move. Once the players are asleep the thief, Kotaro, will make his move to steal the scrolls.

Whoever is on watch must make a Resilience check or they will fall asleep from exhaustion. If they remain awake then they can make a Perception roll opposed by Kotaro's Stealth skill. If they succeed, they will see Kotaro leaving but he has a head start on them and he is a fast runner. If the players do not notice him he will simply slip away and the players will only notice that the scrolls are gone in the morning.

Once he has the scrolls in his possession, Kotaro will head south into Fujiwara territory where his employers will take possession of the scrolls and use the information to their advantage and monitor the progress of the war.

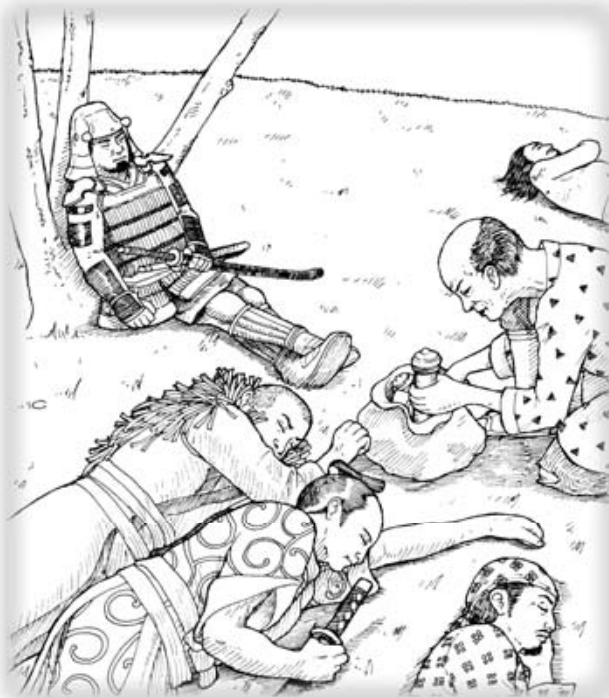
## Following the Trail

The muddy ground from last night's rain has worked to the players' advantage and a successful Perception check will reveal the tracks left by Kotaro, which seem to head to the south.

If some or all of the players decide to follow the tracks, after a short distance they will discover the thief stopped and mounted a horse. The players will have to set a fast pace if they are to catch up with Kotaro and the thought that they are heading in the wrong direction should weigh heavy on their minds.

Kotaro is arrogant. He will not even consider the thought that he is being followed, so will not push his horse too hard. This means that the players will catch up with him later in the day.

Once Kotaro is captured, the players can question him. He is not a warrior and will not put up much of a fight. With a few threats he will talk. Kotaro will not have the name of his employer but he will know they work in the interests of the Fujiwara.



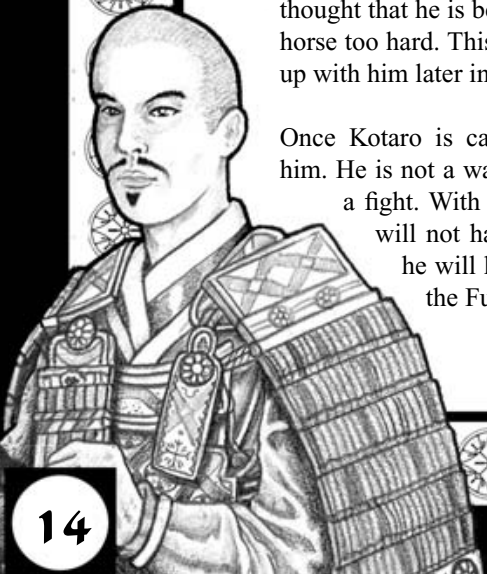
By the time the players get back on track they will be a day behind schedule and their hopes for saving Ryo will not look good. It will take another day to get to Unnan from here and they are exhausted. It is best if they make camp and set off first thing.

## Unnan

One day later the party will arrive at the city of Unnan. Although the military presence here is strong, it is clear that Unnan is a rich and prospering city. Beautifully constructed buildings line the streets in an organised style and throngs of people from the higher classes walk the streets wearing silks of the latest fashions.

Minamoto no Hirozaki has his command base in one of the central buildings. It is not the most extravagant in appearance but its wide entrance makes it functional. Several Bushi stand guard outside and will only allow authorised personnel inside the building. Once the players show that they have dispatches from Minamoto Chogen they will be allowed to pass.

If the players were not delayed by Kotaro or other encounters, you can skip to the Alternate Outcome, otherwise read out the following:





## Kotaro

A short, average looking man, Kotaro is overconfident in his abilities but spineless on the rare occasions that he gets caught.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	11	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-/4
CON	10	Damage Bonus:	-1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-/3
DEX	16	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15)	-/3
SIZ	9	Strike Rank:	+14	Chest (10-12)	-/6
INT	13	On:	29	Abdomen (07-09)	-/5
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/4
CHA	14	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/4

*Basic Skills:* Acrobatics 36%, Athletics 32%, Courtesy 32%, Dodge 47%, Perception 35%, Persistence 32%, Resilience 27%, Riding 34%, Stealth 67%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 63%, Lore (Iwami province) 28%

*Combat:* Tanto 47%      1D6-1D2

*Armour:* None

Once inside, a servant shows you to Hirozaki's war room where you wait patiently at the doorway. Inside you can see a large map of Iwami province spread across a table. A tall and muscular man, obviously Hirozaki, sits with his advisors as they update troop movements and discuss strategy.

Hirozaki looks up and beckons you over. You hand over the documents and he studies them intently. After several minutes he glares at you, looking less than pleased.

'Today is the 6th day, Chogen stated you would be here on the 5th day. By the time reinforcements get there it will be too late. I have already had reports of a large bakemono force heading towards Ryo.'

Had you got this message to me on time we could have stopped them. Your failure is great, as is your dishonour. If the Ainu have joined the fight, then the loss of a port town like Ryo is a terrible blow.'

Hirozaki shakes his head, his disappointment and anger are evident as you try to avoid his steely gaze.

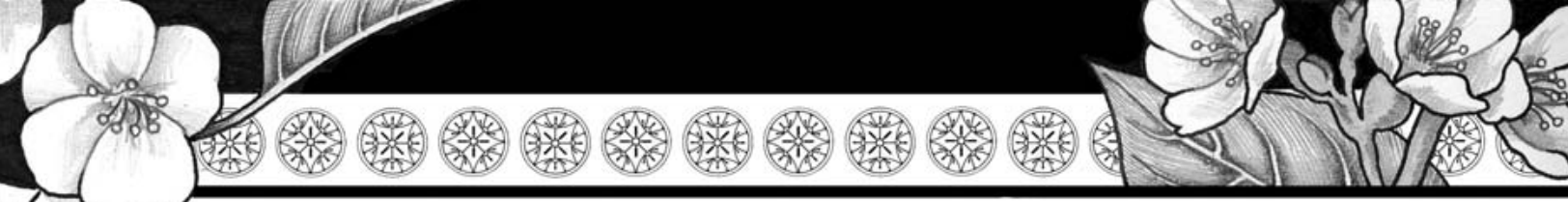
If the players try to explain what happened, Hirozaki will not be interested in their excuses. In his eyes, they failed and that is all that there is to it. The players may also suggest that reinforcements are sent just in case but Hirozaki will not commit his forces to a battle that has, in all likelihood, already been lost.

Each player loses 4 On for this failure and it can not be prevented by spending Hero Points. They should really feel the impact of their dishonour, which will be made evident by people's reaction to them, especially any samurai stationed in Unnan.

### Alternate Outcome

The players might not have followed Kotaro or only sent some of the party after him so the rest could return to Unnan for reinforcements. As long as they were not delayed too much with other encounters, Hirozaki will





immediately dispatch a large unit of mounted samurai as soon as they inform him of the situation. Several days later he will summon the players.

*'The reinforcements sent to Ryo have returned. A large force of bakemono and Ainu reinforcements had camped outside the town. Victory would have been impossible and Ryo has fallen to the enemy.'*

The rest of the campaign will continue as normal, just miss out any references to the players' failure and loss of honour in this matter. However, if the players do not retrieve the dispatches they will lose 1 On.

### A New Mission

Hirozaki will give the players a new task. Read out the following:

*'Minamoto Chogen knows a great deal about our troop deployment and our strategies. There is a good chance he has been captured and if so, Sushigawa will be torturing him for this information.'*

*Chogen is strong willed but we can not take the chance that he will talk. You must find a way to get back into Ryo. Once there, you must either free Chogen or failing that you must kill him.*

*Although your failure was great, you know the lay of the land there and that makes you the best choice. This mission will also give you the opportunity to redeem yourselves a little.*

*This will not be easy. If you need any supplies, speak to Arimoro.'*

Hirozaki will then return to the war room. The players must now discuss how to get back in to Ryo and complete this mission. At this point they can only make preliminary plans until they are able to see the defences at Ryo.

### Meeting Arimoro

Arimoro is the quartermaster here in Unnan and knows many of the samurai and soldiers (his statistics can be found on page 17). Arimoro will give the players anything they need to accomplish their mission as well as fresh horses if required. The players' objective is to rescue Chogen so they will need at least one extra horse but more if they expect to rescue others that might be held prisoner.

### Return to Ryo

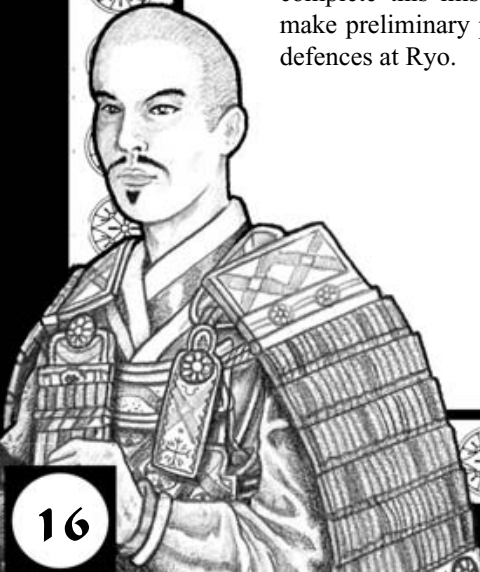
By the time the party leaves Unnan, it will be early afternoon. They must ride for the rest of the day, make camp and after another half day ride they will arrive at Ryo.

You can include a random encounter on the way if you wish, using the tables in Appendix II. Perhaps use one to indicate the gathering of supplies by the bakemono if the players have not figured it out yet. The party will also pass some patrols of either Minamoto or Taira troops, especially near Unnan.

As the players approach Ryo, they will have to be careful not to be detected by wandering bands of bakemono and Ainu. If they succeed with their Perception rolls, then they can safely avoid the enemy. However, if they fail, they will be spotted and the enemy group will rush to attack them. Obviously, if this happens too near to Ryo then their presence may be known to Sushigawa.

Once they are close enough they will be able to get a good view of the town and its condition. Read out the following:

*You peer over the crest of a hill and look over the town of Ryo. The gates and palisades have been reinforced and two more towers are being built. There appears to be a distinct segregation between the Ainu and bakemono forces. The Ainu have occupied the west side and the bakemono to the east.*



## Minamoto Arimoro

Arimoro is in his late forties and walks with a limp. This friendly war veteran is a knowledgeable man and many Bushi come to him for advice and information.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	10	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20)	-6
CON	11	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	-5
DEX	11	Magic Points:	14	R. Arm (13-15)	-5
SIZ	12	Strike Rank:	+13	Chest (10-12)	-8
INT	16	On:	85	Abdomen (07-09)	-7
POW	14	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-6
CHA	14	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-6

*Basic Skills:* Courtesy 50%, Lore (World) 46%, Perception 50%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 76%, Lore (Iwami province) 56%, Lore (Geography) 36%, Heraldry 36%

*None of Chogen's men can be seen but civilians are being used as slaves to build, fetch and carry. To find out more you need to get inside the town.*

Also note that although Enezga commanded the bakemono during the attack, he has left Sushigawa in charge of Ryo for now whilst he attends to other matters.

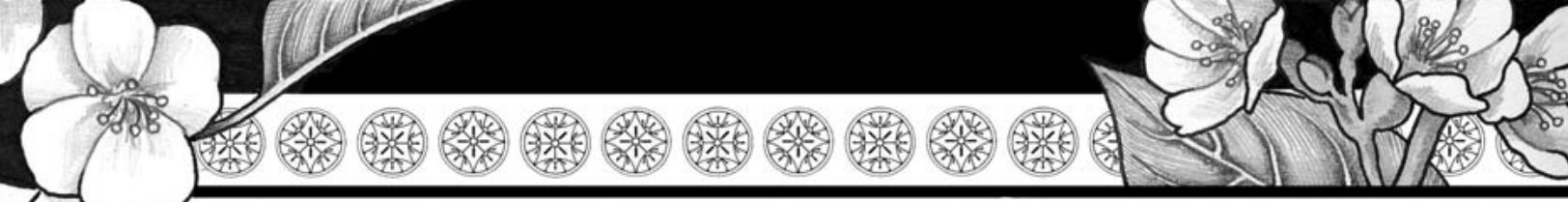
## Breaking In

The only way for the players to gain access undetected, is to enter via the harbour at night. Only the Ainu occupy this end of the town and they do not have night sight like the bakemono.

## Finding a Boat

To get to the harbour they must either swim or acquire a small boat. Some fishermen live just outside of the town, near the sea. After a few hours of searching up the coast the players will find a small house with an adjoining jetty and boat.





If they search the house they will find the body of a dead fisherman, obviously murdered by the bakemono. This seems to have happened quite recently. There are a variety of nets and fishing equipment but the only items of real interest will be a pair of oars.

Investigating the boat, the players will discover the line has been cut and it is floating away from the jetty. Someone will need to swim out with the oars and bring the boat back. It is only a small boat but it will just be big enough to accommodate the party, even if it does sink low in the water. Some of the players might have to bail out water as it leaks in over the sides.

Once they are prepared and night has fallen, the players can attempt to sneak in to Ryo. Under cover of darkness they must row the boat silently into the harbour. There are a few Ainu on watch but they are looking out for big vessels approaching from the sea. Unless the players do something particularly unwise they will not be detected.

Once they are in a relatively safe position, it is probably best if only the stealthiest move out to investigate the area.

### Getting a Disguise

At some point, the players may have the idea of getting some Ainu armour and clothing as a disguise. It is not foolproof but in the dark it may be the difference between being detected and going unnoticed. Helmets will, of course, be the deciding factor.

Their best bet is to ambush individuals or small groups that have left the inns. They will need to attack quickly and quietly or risk being detected.

### The Search for Chogen

Sneaking around the town at night is not easy. There may not be any active patrols inside but Ainu walk the streets, some on matters of business and some going to or from the inns.

The players must look in the most likely buildings without being caught. Most of the houses have been converted to barracks. Some will be empty, others will not. The shops and stalls now serve as the stores for food and weapons.

If the players venture towards the eastern side of the town, they will see hordes of bakemono camped out in the streets. If the players get too close they will be seen by the bakemono.

### Warehouses

At some point they will investigate the warehouses, which are the only buildings that are guarded by four heavily armed Ainu. Sneaking around these buildings is more difficult than elsewhere due to the guards stationed outside. However, their attention is focussed more on people coming out of, rather than in to, the buildings

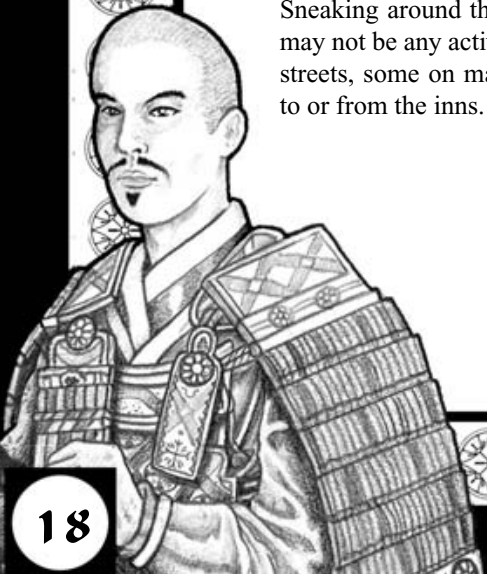
If the players get close enough, they can peer through the timbers. In the larger buildings they will see all of the captive civilians and in the smaller building they will see Chogen and his four remaining soldiers. They are all tied up and one of the soldiers looks wounded. The nature of the injuries suggests that he has been tortured.


### Sushigawa

Before the players head back to report their findings to the rest of the group, read the following:

*As you prepare to head back you see the guards jump to attention. A small man approaches them dressed in a finely tailored kimono. Although small in size, the guards seem fearful of him and open the doors. From what you have heard, this must be the powerful sorcerer, Sushigawa.*

*Sushigawa enters the warehouse and you peer through a crack in the wall to see him speak to Chogen.*





*'Are you ready to speak samurai? Don't let your honour be the death of you, a man of your skill would profit well in my employ.'*

*Chogen spits at him. Sushigawa simply grins.*

*'You will break soon enough. How many men is your honour worth?'*

*Sushigawa says a brief incantation and shoots a black jagged spike from his hand. The spike impales a soldier tied to one of the pillars. The soldier lets out a cry of agony as blood pours from his shoulder.*

*'Silence.' Sushigawa commands as he begins another spell. The man lets out a muffled noise as his mouth seals over.*

*The torture continues as you look away in horror.*

It should be clear to the players that Sushigawa is incredibly powerful and any attempt to fight him at this point would result in certain death.

## Breaking Out

Once the players have discovered the whereabouts of Chogen and seen the power of Sushigawa, they must plan a way to free the commander and his soldiers. They may also consider freeing the other captives as well but this will be extremely difficult as there are several thousand of them crammed into the warehouses.

The only way into the warehouses is through the guarded entrances or to break through the wooden walls. Either way will draw attention and they will probably have to fight their way out. Another concern will be that their boat can not hold any more people, so they will either need another one, make two journeys or some will have to swim.

From what the players saw, some of the soldiers will be able to fight, as will Chogen but they are weak and have no weapons or armour.

## Rescue

The rescue will play out depending on the players' plan. However they intend to accomplish the task, do not make it easy for them. Once any AINU or bakemono realise what is going on they will sound the alarm.

The quickest method is for some of them to fight the guards whilst others free the prisoners. Once attacked, the guards (use the AINU Warrior statistics as detailed in Appendix I, page 106) will shout for help and the players will hear shouts coming from nearby streets. It will not be long before more AINU arrive so the prisoners must be freed quickly.

Chogen will be glad that the players are here but angry that they failed in their mission. Chogen and the soldiers will grab weapons from the guards. The soldier who was tortured is unable to walk and one of his companions will support him.

As they make their way towards the boat they will be challenged by several AINU soldiers. Fighting these will slow down their escape. Once they have been killed, read out the following:

*As the AINU drop to the floor you see more approaching. Escape will be impossible if these fights continue but one of the soldiers turns to Chogen.*

*'Sir, you leave with these men and we will cover your retreat.'*

*Chogen nods as he takes the injured soldier. The other three take defensive positions to cover your escape.*

The party can now continue out of Ryo as planned. You can put additional adversaries in their path depending on how good their escape plan is. Once they get back to their horses you may also include an encounter with a large band of bakemono.

Enezga's forces do not have any mounted troops, so once on horseback the journey back to Unnan should pass without incident.



## Reporting to Hirozaki

Chogen will say little on the journey and due to the players' failure he will not even thank them for his rescue. Once they arrive at Unnan, Chogen will report straight to Hirozaki. After a little while, the party will be summoned to the war room.

*The hour is late and Hirozaki stands alone in the war room.*

*'Thank you for bringing Chogen back. You did well and have restored some of your honour but you have a long way to go before you have atoned for your failure.'*

*For now you have earned some rest but have no doubt I will call on you again.'*

*With that he ushers you out of the war room and closes the door.*

The players will now have several months before the events in the next chapter take place but they will still be in the service of Hirozaki. They can use this time to train and attend to any other matters. You may also have your own scenarios or missions that you wish to run during this time.

## Rewards

With this chapter complete, it is time to reward the players as follows.

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Completing encounters	1 improvement roll
Rescuing Chogen	1 Hero Point 1 On
Rescuing civilians	1 Hero Point
Other roleplaying bonus/ penalty	GM determined





# INTRIGUE IN MIYAKO

'There is observation and there is seeing. The eye of observation is strong. The eye of seeing is weak.'

*The Book of Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi*

Unless you have added your own scenarios, the players would have spent the last few months on escort duty but they would have had time to train if required. Read out the following:

*The year is now 1,000 A.D. For the last few months Hirozaki has put you all on escort duty to protect shipments and supply convoys. You have had a few encounters fighting off bands of bakemono and Ainu mercenaries but there have been no great battles or deeds of honour. After escorting two kurumas into Unnan, you are summoned to Hirozaki.*

*'Katsu no Kiyoshi, a minister for the Ministry of Military Affairs, is heading to Miyako tomorrow to meet with the Great Council. He has his own honour guard but I have insisted he has additional protection for the journey.'*

*You are to provide extra security and obey his orders until he releases you from service, at which point you will return here. Rest well tonight, for you leave at dawn. Do not fail me on this mission.'*



## Code of Conduct

- ♣ Subordinates must show respect and deference at all times.
- ♣ They must obey any order without question or hesitation.
- ♣ They may only speak when given permission.
- ♣ When speaking, it must be clear and concise.
- ♣ When addressing a superior by name, the suffix *-sama* is used to reinforce their superiority.

The players will have the day to re-supply and get any affairs in order. This mission requires etiquette as well as arms and they must ensure that protocol is followed at all times. Remind the players of the code of conduct. Roleplay this as much as possible but use Courtesy checks where necessary.

The players should be ready and waiting at Kiyoshi's kuruma (kuruma is the Japanese word for wheel and is also used to refer to carriages, carts and wagons) before he boards. If the players arrive late Kiyoshi will not be impressed.

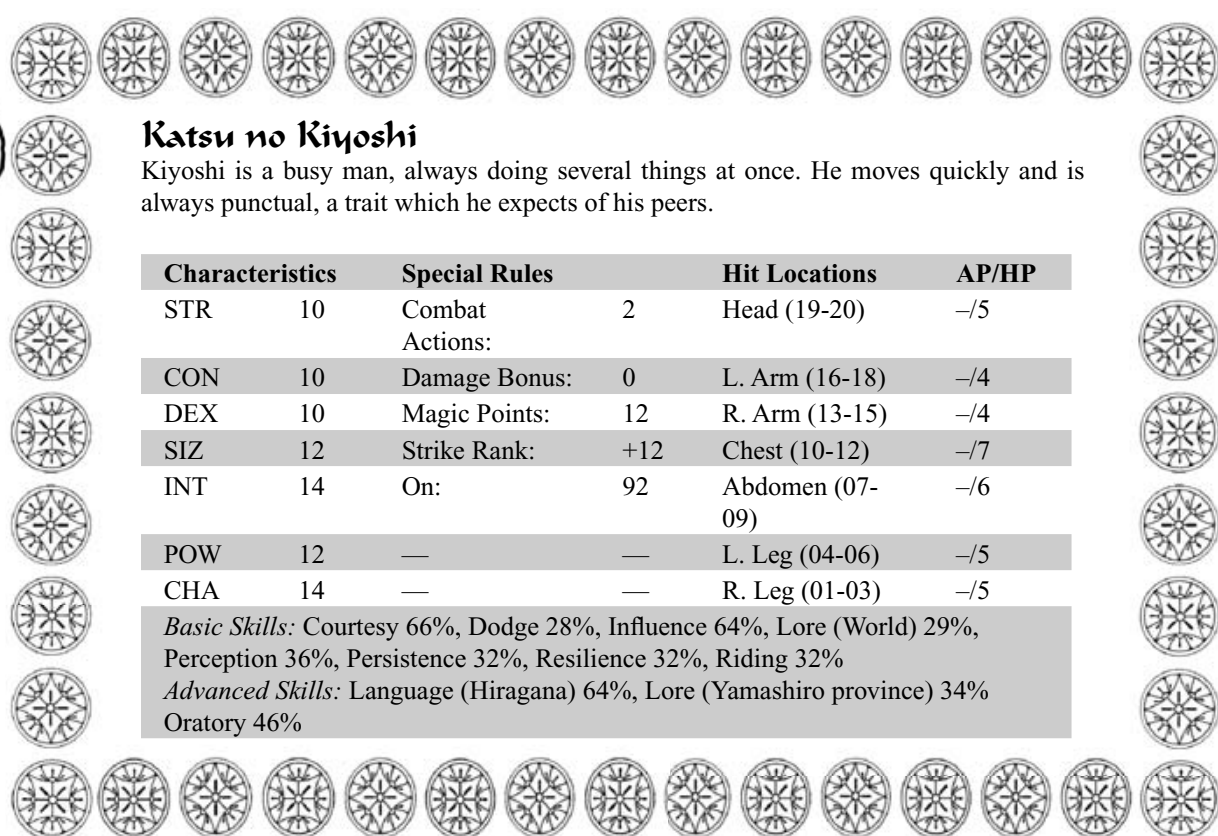
As one would expect, Kiyoshi's carriage is extravagant, as befits a man of his station. It is painted in blacks, oranges and greens with intricate decorations flowing around the edges and wheels. The same patterns continue along the supports to which two mighty oxen are harnessed.

Kiyoshi is ushered into the kuruma by his personal servant who sits by the driver. Four samurai take position around the kuruma and at Kiyoshi's word, the driver spurs the oxen into motion. The party will not be ordered into position as the samurai are confident in their abilities, so the players are free to organise themselves as they see fit.

## The Road to Miyako

The journey to Miyako will take three days and over that time the samurai will begin to accept the players, knowing that they are here only at the order of their superior. However, the samurai will not speak of anything relating to their employer or his business.

The servant does not speak at all. She spends most of her time attending to the needs of Kiyoshi who spends most of his time in the kuruma or in his tent when they make camp. The servant cooks for Kiyoshi and the samurai but none of the food is offered to the players. Kiyoshi will not speak to the players and any that are in the Minamoto clan will detect the old rivalry behind these feelings.



### Katsu no Kiyoshi

Kiyoshi is a busy man, always doing several things at once. He moves quickly and is always punctual, a trait which he expects of his peers.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 10	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20) -/5
CON 10	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18) -/4
DEX 10	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15) -/4
SIZ 12	Strike Rank:	+12	Chest (10-12) -/7
INT 14	On:	92	Abdomen (07-09) -/6
POW 12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06) -/5
CHA 14	—	—	R. Leg (01-03) -/5
<i>Basic Skills:</i> Courtesy 66%, Dodge 28%, Influence 64%, Lore (World) 29%, Perception 36%, Persistence 32%, Resilience 32%, Riding 32%			
<i>Advanced Skills:</i> Language (Hiragana) 64%, Lore (Yamashiro province) 34% Oratory 46%			

There are no bandits or enemy raiders that will take on the party and four additional samurai, so the journey will be uneventful until a pre-planned ambush takes place.

### Ambush

On the second day, the players will assume that they are fairly safe as they have travelled a good distance from the main war zone in Iwami. Read out the following:

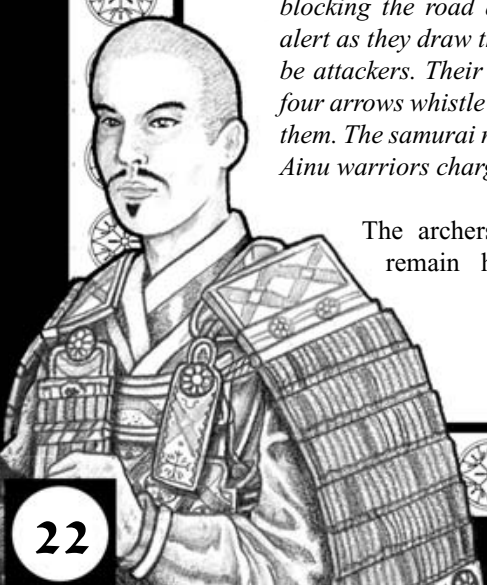
*The kuruma comes to a stop at the sight of a fallen tree blocking the road ahead. The samurai are instantly alert as they draw their bows, scanning for any would be attackers. Their instincts are proven correct when four arrows whistle out of the tree line striking three of them. The samurai release their arrows as a number of Ainu warriors charge towards you all.*

The archers are a real threat as they will remain hidden while their companions

engage directly. One of the archers will have died from the initial shots from the samurai and another will be injured. The location of the other two remains unknown and can only be found by tracing the flight of their arrows.

Of the main attacking force, most of them will occupy the samurai (three of whom have already been shot) whilst two or three others will attempt to assassinate Kiyoshi. Although this hit was planned, they were not expecting the party to be here as the players were a late addition to the guard duty. The samurai are putting up a good fight and players should really be focussing on the archers and the assassins.

The exact number of mercenaries that attack is up to you but there should be enough to kill most, if not all, of the samurai and injure some of the players. There must be a real danger of death here. The only reason Kiyoshi will survive is due to the presence of the players.



## Intrigue in Miyako





### Aftermath

Once the fight is over, most of the samurai will have been killed or seriously injured and the players will probably have taken their share of injuries too. The driver and servant hid during the fight and since they were no threat they will survive the encounter.

Hopefully the players will realise that this was a planned hit, especially since it is so unusual to see AINU this far inland. If the bodies are searched, they will all have currency from their own land but one will also have a purse of Imperial coin. A successful Perception check will also reveal that these coins are freshly minted.

When the players have secured the area, read out the following:

*Once it is safe, Kiyoshi will step out of the kuruma to see the carnage for himself. He will look genuinely sad at the loss of his men. He turns and speaks to you for the first time.*

*'Thank you brave men. You have done me a great service and I ask you to do more, for we have much to do in Miyako. I will send dispatches to Minamoto no*

*Hirozaki to inform him of this but for now, let us attend to our dead then we must make haste.'*

With the samurai dead or injured, the players are now Kiyoshi's personal guard and he is now more approachable. If the players share their findings with Kiyoshi, he will conclude that someone in the Imperial Court, quite possibly Fujiwara, wants him dead. However, he will not explain why just yet.

The players may also mention their run in with Kotaro and any information they got from him, further implicating the Fujiwara clan against the Minamoto and Taira.

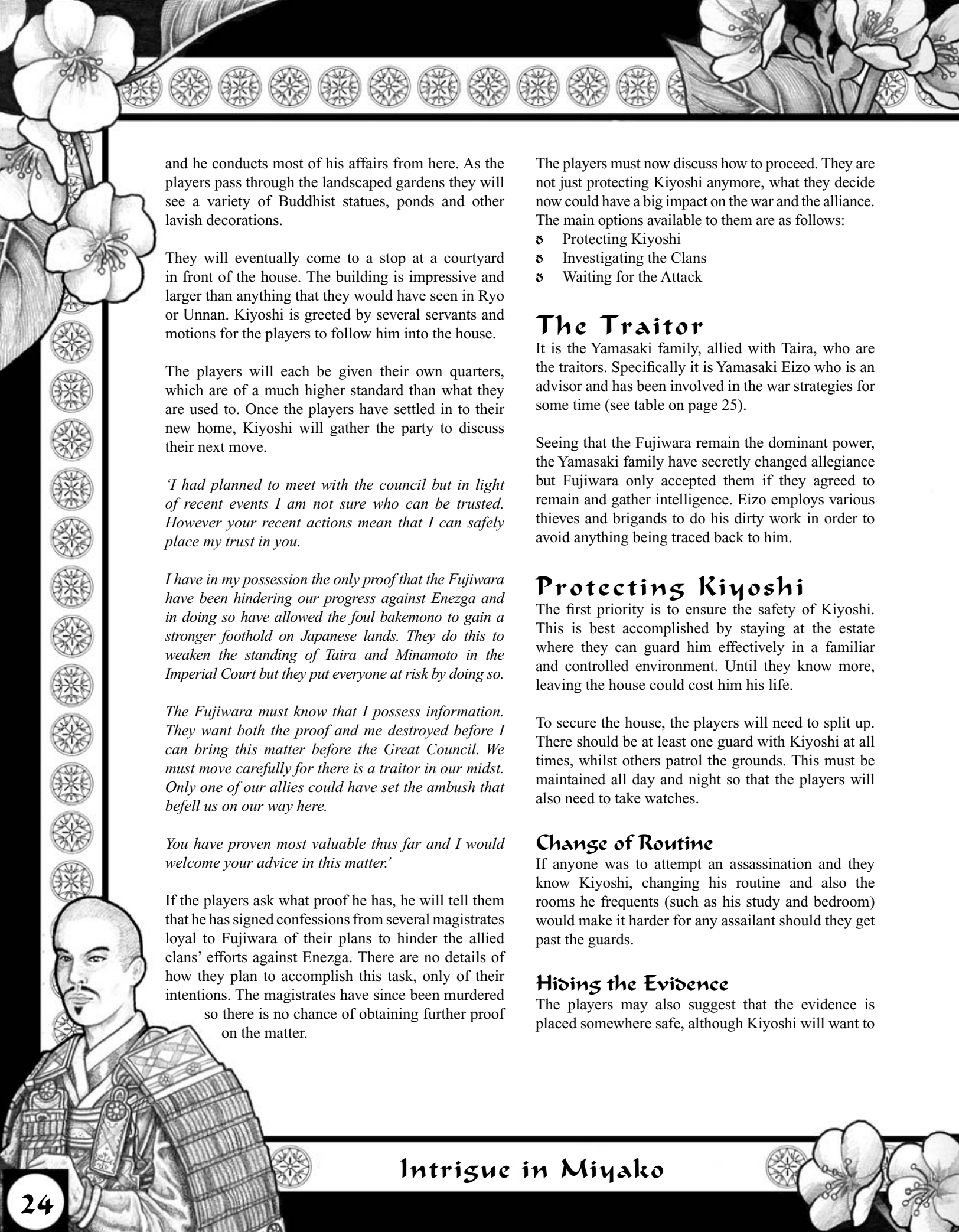
### Miyako

The remainder of the journey will pass without incident and the party will arrive at Miyako the following day. The capital is home to the palace and Imperial Court. In many ways it is like Unnan, except on a much grander scale.

### The Katsu Estate

The kuruma will head straight for the Katsu estate in the noble district. This is Kiyoshi's family home





and he conducts most of his affairs from here. As the players pass through the landscaped gardens they will see a variety of Buddhist statues, ponds and other lavish decorations.

They will eventually come to a stop at a courtyard in front of the house. The building is impressive and larger than anything that they would have seen in Ryo or Unnan. Kiyoshi is greeted by several servants and motions for the players to follow him into the house.

The players will each be given their own quarters, which are of a much higher standard than what they are used to. Once the players have settled in to their new home, Kiyoshi will gather the party to discuss their next move.

*'I had planned to meet with the council but in light of recent events I am not sure who can be trusted. However your recent actions mean that I can safely place my trust in you.'*

*I have in my possession the only proof that the Fujiwara have been hindering our progress against Enezga and in doing so have allowed the foul bakemono to gain a stronger foothold on Japanese lands. They do this to weaken the standing of Taira and Minamoto in the Imperial Court but they put everyone at risk by doing so.*

*The Fujiwara must know that I possess information. They want both the proof and me destroyed before I can bring this matter before the Great Council. We must move carefully for there is a traitor in our midst. Only one of our allies could have set the ambush that befell us on our way here.*

*You have proven most valuable thus far and I would welcome your advice in this matter.'*

If the players ask what proof he has, he will tell them that he has signed confessions from several magistrates loyal to Fujiwara of their plans to hinder the allied clans' efforts against Enezga. There are no details of how they plan to accomplish this task, only of their intentions. The magistrates have since been murdered so there is no chance of obtaining further proof on the matter.

The players must now discuss how to proceed. They are not just protecting Kiyoshi anymore, what they decide now could have a big impact on the war and the alliance. The main options available to them are as follows:

- ♣ Protecting Kiyoshi
- ♣ Investigating the Clans
- ♣ Waiting for the Attack

## The Traitor

It is the Yamasaki family, allied with Taira, who are the traitors. Specifically it is Yamasaki Eizo who is an advisor and has been involved in the war strategies for some time (see table on page 25).

Seeing that the Fujiwara remain the dominant power, the Yamasaki family have secretly changed allegiance but Fujiwara only accepted them if they agreed to remain and gather intelligence. Eizo employs various thieves and brigands to do his dirty work in order to avoid anything being traced back to him.

## Protecting Kiyoshi

The first priority is to ensure the safety of Kiyoshi. This is best accomplished by staying at the estate where they can guard him effectively in a familiar and controlled environment. Until they know more, leaving the house could cost him his life.

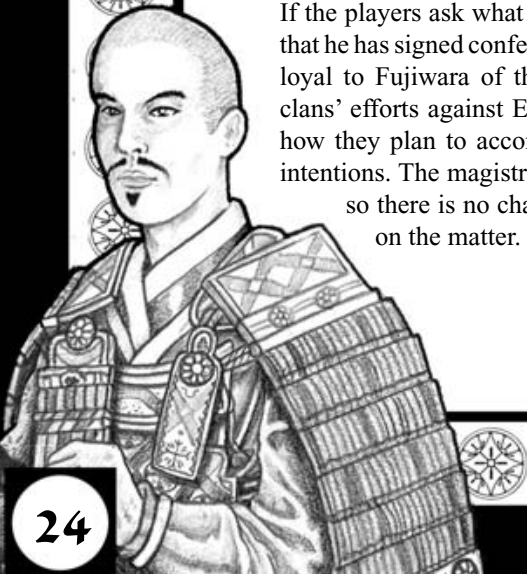
To secure the house, the players will need to split up. There should be at least one guard with Kiyoshi at all times, whilst others patrol the grounds. This must be maintained all day and night so that the players will also need to take watches.

## Change of Routine

If anyone was to attempt an assassination and they know Kiyoshi, changing his routine and also the rooms he frequents (such as his study and bedroom) would make it harder for any assailant should they get past the guards.

## Hiding the Evidence

The players may also suggest that the evidence is placed somewhere safe, although Kiyoshi will want to





## Yamasaki Eizo

Eizo is tall and skinny. He has a well groomed moustache and wears expensive clothes. Beneath his courteous exterior is a cunning and ruthless individual.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 10	Combat 2 Actions:	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 11	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 12	Magic Points: 11	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 11	Strike Rank: +13	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 14	On: 73	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 11	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 12	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Courtesy 54%, Dodge 36%, Influence 42%, Perception 34%, Persistence 41%, Resilience 30%, Riding 36%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Hiragana) 30% Oratory 32%

*Combat:* Wakazashi 43% 1D8

*Armour:* None

keep the confessions with him at all times. The players must be convincing for him to change his mind.

## Investigating the Clans

By checking the records to find out which nobles have attended strategy meetings from where dispatches were intercepted, it is possible to narrow down the list of suspects without drawing any attention. Kiyoshi will provide the documents they need in the form of the handout on page 26.

By cross referencing, the players should be able to narrow down the suspects to two people. From the list they will deduce that the only people who were at all four locations were Haratomo Atushi and Yamasaki Eizo.

The players must now decide how to proceed. They can either follow the movements of Atushi and Eizo or invite them to the estate and question them directly.

## Questioning the Suspects

Kiyoshi will be able to arrange meetings with both Atushi and Eizo for the following day. The meetings will be held at the estate as it is a controlled environment and reduces any security risks.

When the suspects arrive, the players will have to be subtle and discreet when they ask their questions or they risk insulting their superiors and potentially losing On. Kiyoshi will have to lead the meetings and will explain that the party are there as advisors.

The players will have to devise a reason for inviting the nobles and they must also decide what questions to ask. They may have prearranged for Kiyoshi to ask some of the questions to avoid any potential insults.

If the right questions are asked, there is a good chance that Eizo will slip up and inadvertently reveal his guilt. Any discussion of the dispatches being intercepted



## Attendance Reports

### Miyako

Minamoto Ryoga  
Minamoto Yasamochi  
Katsu no Kiyoshi  
Taira Haragushi  
Taira Takeshi  
Haratomo Atushi (allied to Minamoto)  
Kojiro Takamoro (allied to Taira)  
Takoya Masaki (allied to Minamoto)  
Yamasaki Eizo (allied to Taira)

### Ataro

Taira Hitoshi (commander at Ataro)  
Taira Takeshi  
Minamoto Ryoga  
Minamoto Yasamochi  
Kojiro Takamoro (allied to Taira)  
Yamasaki Eizo (allied to Taira)

### Ryo

Minamoto Chogen (commander of Ryo)  
Minamoto Ryoga  
Haratomo Atushi (allied to Minamoto)  
Yamasaki Eizo (allied to Taira)


### Unnan

Minamoto no Hirozaki (commander of Unnan)  
Minamoto Chogen (commander of Ryo)  
Minamoto Ryoga  
Katsu no Kiyoshi  
Haratomo Atushi (allied to Minamoto)  
Takoya Masaki (allied to Minamoto)  
Yamasaki Eizo (allied to Taira)



## Intrigue in Miyako





(there need not be a mention of spies or traitors) will make Eizo uncomfortable and he must make a Persistence check. If he fails, the players may make Perception checks to detect a shift in his demeanour.

To avoid giving the game away, make the same rolls for Atushi but since he is not guilty Perception checks from the players will not be necessary.

If the players detect Eizo's guilt they may ask more direct questions as there is no consequence for insulting a traitor. If this is the case then you can skip to the Questioning Eizo section.

### Following the Suspects

Some of the players may wish to follow the suspects, although most Bushi will balk at the idea of sneaking around. It would be best if only one or two of them did this so the rest of the party can protect Kiyoshi.

### Atushi

Atushi goes about his daily business. He visits various dignitaries and conducts his affairs. Nothing untoward is apparent in his behaviour.

### Eizo

Much like Atushi, Eizo conducts his business. However, if they watch his house through the night (they will have to conceal themselves to avoid arousing attention) they will see him leave just before dawn. During this time, Eizo's assassins would have made their attempt as described later on.

Eizo is heading to the tree by the east gate to pay the assassins for their services. Depending on the actions of the other players, there are several outcomes to this encounter:

- ♣ The assassins meet Eizo as planned. They may or may not have been successful depending on how the other players fared.
- ♣ The assassins are dead and after waiting for half an hour, Eizo will return home.
- ♣ The other players know Eizo is coming here to meet the assassins and are waiting to ambush him and they may even be disguised as the assassins to fool him.

If both groups of players are there, it is unlikely that they will be aware of the other's presence here, which could have some interesting results.

## Waiting for the Attack

A risky option is to wait for the enemy to make their move and attempt to catch them in the act. To do this, the players must maintain the security of the estate whilst allowing subtle opportunities for the enemy to make their move.

It is a difficult and risky plan but one that allows them to apprehend some of the culprits. Once they have a captive they can interrogate them to find out who is behind this or at least give them some clues to investigate.

## Intruders

If the players have difficulty in finding the traitor you can use this encounter to give them some leads. If they are already making some headway then you can simply allow the assassins to get away or they will not know anything that could lead the players to Eizo. Let the party's original investigation lead them to success but provide them with extra clues if necessary.

During the night, an attempt will be made to steal the evidence and assassinate Kiyoshi by two brothers, Azuramo and Oguramo (stats on page 29). If the house is patrolled by guards, they know that gaining entry will be difficult. Oguramo will create a distraction while Azuramo sneaks into the house. The distraction will be subtle such as a sound or slight movement. They hope that it will draw some of the guards away to allow Azuramo to slip past them.

Oguramo will lead the players around the gardens whilst keeping under cover. Use Perception rolls opposed by Oguramo's Stealth. If the players are successful they will see him and pursue. Oguramo may have one attempt per discovery to conceal himself again, if not he will run.

Meanwhile Azuramo will head straight for Kiyoshi's room and will continue to search the house until he finds his target. Once he finds Kiyoshi, he will quietly



interrogate him to find out the location of the evidence, before dispatching him and taking the scrolls. Kiyoshi will fight back and shout for help, giving the players a few rounds to get to him before he is overpowered and killed. If the players get there in time, Azuramo will attempt to flee (possibly with the scrolls).

Alternatively, if the players purposely lapse in their security, both of the brothers will enter the house and follow the same procedure to find Kiyoshi and the scrolls.

### Interrogation

If either brother is captured, it will be difficult to get information from them. Even if the interrogation is successful, the brothers do not know the name of their employer. They always make contact when it is dark so they have not seen their employer's face.

If the players think to, they can get the information for the pay off and attempt to subdue the unknown employer. This will take place under the tree by the east gate, just before dawn.

### Failure

If the scrolls are stolen the players lose 1 On. If Kiyoshi is killed they will lose a further 3 On.

### The Pay Off

If the players managed to obtain enough information from the brothers, they can lay in wait at the meeting point. If anyone is of a similar size to the brothers, they may wish to disguise themselves in the assassin's clothes in order to lure out the traitor.

The streets are quiet at this time of the morning and the players will not have to wait long. Shortly before the sun comes up, a man dressed in a kimono walks over to the tree and he moves so that the sun is always behind him concealing his identity.

Eizo was not expecting the brothers to fail so he will not suspect an ambush. The players should be able to subdue him quite easily. To avoid any awkward encounters it is recommended they take him back to the Katsu estate.

### Questioning Eizo

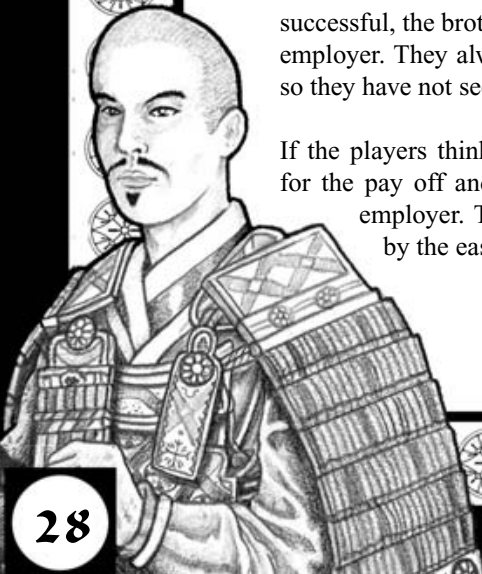
Kiyoshi will be present during the interrogation and he will immediately recognise Eizo if his identity is not already known. Kiyoshi will explain to the players that Eizo is a military advisor and is involved in various strategy meetings within the alliance.

The players will get to interrogate Eizo and eventually he will break. When he does, read out the following:

*'Yes, our family has changed allegiance to the Fujiwara. They are more powerful than the Taira and Minamoto. It doesn't matter that I tell you this Kiyoshi. You can not reveal this to the council as I know your secret too.'*

*Kiyoshi will look uncomfortable as he says this but before he can speak Eizo will continue.*

*'We know that you were secretly adopted by the Katsu family and that your birth parents were Fujiwara. We have the papers that prove this. So, it would appear that we are at an impasse. You keep our secret and we keep yours.'*



## Azuramo & Oguramo

Both brothers are short but other than that they do not look alike. They say very little and use subtle facial expressions and hand gestures to communicate with each other.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 11	Combat 3 Actions:	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 12	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 18	Magic Points: 12	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 10	Strike Rank: +14	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 12	On: 36	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 12	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 12	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Acrobatics 48%, Athletics 49%, Courtesy 34%, Dodge 43%, Perception 34%, Persistence 52%, Resilience 29%, Sleight 38%, Stealth 68%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Katakana) 62% *Combat:* Tanto 59% 1D6

*Armour:* None. The brothers are of the Heimjin class (peasants) and not affiliated with any clan. They are of the Yorito family.

*Of course, the Fujiwara will most likely employ a different strategy now as I am no use to them. I suppose you have won this round but it is a small victory.'*

### Stalemate

Kiyoshi will be shocked but he knows Eizo is correct. Kiyoshi will order the players to let him go and will make them swear an oath of secrecy to never reveal what they have heard here today. If word of this got out it would cause political problems for both him and the alliance.

If the players do not swear an oath to keep the secret, they will be dismissed from Kiyoshi's service and the players will lose 1 On. Kiyoshi will keep the evidence incriminating the Fujiwara safely locked away. If this

matter were to be brought before the Imperial Court, it could result in embarrassment for the allied clans if they do not have the evidence to back up their claims.

### The Fate of Eizo

Eizo's dishonour is great. He has failed the Fujiwara, betrayed the Taira and allied clans and by his actions honourable men have died. With such a loss of honour Eizo should commit seppuku but he is too much of a coward for that.

On hearing this from his agents, Sushigawa will seize this opportunity and will persuade Eizo to join him. With no other options Eizo agrees and the players will encounter him again in the next chapter.

## Reporting to Hirozaki

Once the stalemate has been reached and the players have sworn their oaths (or not), Kiyoshi will release them from his service. The players are then free to head back to Unnan and report to Hirozaki.

They will have plenty of time on their way back to discuss what to report to Hirozaki. He will be pleased that they saved Kiyoshi's life and as long as the story sounds plausible he will be satisfied.

As before, the players will have several months before the events of the next chapter take place. They will, of

course, still be under the orders of Hirozaki but they will have time to train if necessary.

## Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are as follows:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Saving Kiyoshi at the ambush	1 On
Uncovering the plot	1 Hero Point
Other roleplaying bonus/penalty	GM determined





# FRAGILE LOYALTIES

*'Good and bad fortune are matters of fate. Good and bad actions are a Man's Way. Retribution of good and evil is taught simply as a moral lesson.'*

*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo*

Several months have passed since the events at Miyako and Hirozaki has kept the players stationed at Unnan. The players have slowly begun to redeem themselves and Hirozaki sees potential in them, which he wants to nurture. He will summon the players for a new mission:

*'As you may have heard, the war does not go well for us. Enezga's army continues to grow as more Ainu are recruited into his forces. Without these mercenaries, Enezga would be forced to pause and reconsider his next move. This would give us time to regroup and mount an offensive.'*

*We need to find a way to make this happen.'*

Hirozaki will encourage the players to suggest ways of doing this. He will then suggest or confirm the following:

*'The mercenaries fight only for money and that is their weakness. If we can find out the flow of money in Enezga's supply lines and cut off the financial support, the Ainu will soon abandon these lands.'*

*We have considered paying them to fight for us but the cost of such a move could weaken our positions in the Imperial Court. We must also consider that if loyalty can be bought that easily they could turn on us in an instant.'*

*Before you start this mission, your group needs a proper command structure and leadership.'*

Hirozaki will then pick the most qualified player (a samurai if possible) to lead the party. He will also appoint a second in command.

In order to plan this mission, the players will need additional information. Hirozaki will answer any questions if he is able. The key facts are as follows:

- ✧ New recruits arrive at Ryo.
- ✧ Recruits are then deployed as necessary.
- ✧ Ryo has become the main staging area for Enezga's forces.
- ✧ Enezga is now stationed at Ryo.
- ✧ Sushigawa is believed to have left Ryo some time ago.
- ✧ Sushigawa did command the Ainu but this responsibility has now been passed to Enezga.
- ✧ Breaking into Ryo is now extremely difficult as is a full scale assault on the town due to the sheer number of bakemono and Ainu stationed there.
- ✧ There must be supply lines between Ryo, Oda and other enemy strongholds but the source is not known.
- ✧ The Ainu tend to be stationed on the plains and open areas, whilst the bakemono are deployed near rougher terrain to make use of their stealth and ambush tactics.

The players will have three main options:

- ✧ Ainu Alliance
- ✧ Questioning the Ainu
- ✧ Raiding the Supply Lines

Once the players have been successful in making contact with the Ainu (by any method), refer to the Answers section for their results.

## Enemy Territory

Whatever the players decide, they will be going into enemy territory and may have to fight large groups of bakemono and Ainu. To this end, Hirozaki will provide the players with a small force of Bushi if they require it. If the group numbers more than 10, any Stealth checks get a -5% penalty for each additional person in the group.

Once the party enters enemy territory they must stay alert and vigilant. The deeper they go into Enezga's



territories the more patrols they will encounter. To reduce the risk of detection they must avoid the main roads.

Use the Encounters in Enemy Territory to determine the party's progress through Enezga's territories.

## The Language Barrier

However the players intend to speak with the Ainu, they will have to deal with the language problem. The Ainu do not speak Japanese, although some may have picked up a few words or phrases. Likewise, the players will not speak the language of the Ainu so negotiations of any sort will be long and difficult.

The Ainu will know names of towns and other locations where they may have been stationed, patrolled or travelled to. They may also know the names of Ainu or dai bakemono of importance.

Since most other words will have little meaning, hand gestures and drawings will be the only useful methods of communication. Drawing can be on paper if the players have any (the Ainu will not) or if the terrain is suitable they can draw on the ground.

## Ainu Currency

The Ainu have their own currency and Japanese currency is of little use to them. Food and equipment is supplied and since they are not welcome in any towns or cities, they are unable buy anything so Sushigawa pays them in their own currency.

Japanese currency can be used in Ainu lands as each coin still has an intrinsic value. However due to the difference in size, using Japanese currency is difficult to trade in the Ainu's homeland. For this reason, Japanese currency has less value than Ainu currency. A Japanese coin is worth roughly half of its Ainu equivalent of the same metal.

## Ainu Alliance

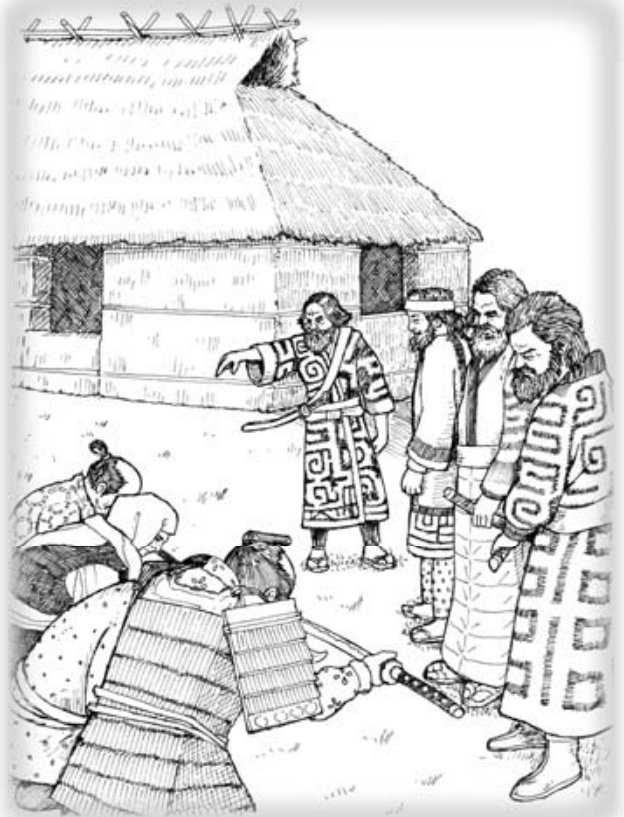
A risky but potentially worthwhile option is to forge an alliance with a mercenary group in exchange for their help and the Ainu could profit well and retire back to their homeland with only a

portion of Sushigawa's war chest should they find it. However, the Ainu may still require a small payment up front to earn their trust and loyalty (limited as it is).

Such an alliance would have many benefits. Their information and access within Enezga's territories would be invaluable, as would the additional warriors. However, the potential for betrayal would be great.

If the players attempt to do this, the only way of negotiating would be to approach a group of Ainu without causing bloodshed. They would have to approach a camp or patrol and avoid fighting them. On seeing the party approach, the Ainu will want to attack so it is important that the players make a show of peace and that they make it clear their intentions are not hostile.

How the party goes about this is entirely up to them but make the Ainu response realistic and do not make it easy for the players. Any information provided will be the same as if they question the Ainu as detailed below.





## Questioning the Ainu

Since it is the Ainu mercenaries who ultimately receive the money, it stands to reason that they will know something of its origin and maybe details of the supply lines. Capturing an Ainu will not be an easy task as they all belong to mercenary bands. If possible the players should attempt to capture the leader of the band as he would have the most information.

To capture one of the Ainu mercenaries, the party must venture into enemy territory (as described on page 32) until they find an Ainu camp or patrol. Once they find an Ainu group, it is up to them to decide how to proceed. They may simply attack or they could approach in peace if they wish to negotiate with the mercenaries.

If the party decides on the fighting option, they will hopefully have left at least one survivor who will need to be bound and secured. They must then decide where to do the interrogation. If they stay in the open there is a good chance they will be discovered, especially if they are on or near a road.

## Speaking with the Ainu

Once the players have made contact or they have secured a prisoner and moved to a relatively safe place, they can begin their bargaining or questioning.

## Interrogation

The players can attempt to interrogate their prisoners. Try to roleplay this as much as possible rather than simply relying on Influence rolls. Each question requires a separate roll but you can give an Influence bonus depending on how well the players have roleplayed the situation. If the Influence roll succeeds the victim can make a Persistence roll to resist. As the interrogation progresses, you can give penalties to the victim's Persistence checks.

This technique can also be used in combination with paying him as described below. This can be quite effective as the money aspect will encourage them to talk.

## Buying the Answers

The Ainu do not have any real loyalty to Sushigawa or Enezga and with enough money, they can be bought.

If the players have obtained some Ainu currency then they will have a much better chance of making a deal with them. If they do not have such currency, then they must pay with their own funds unless they requisitioned some money from Minamoto Arimoro for this task.

Although their loyalty is money based, they are still professionals so it will take a substantial amount for them to betray their employer. Each Ainu band gets paid 10 silver a week for each person in the band so the prisoner would want several gold per member of his group. If the players have killed most of the mercenary band then negotiations will be difficult and the fees much higher.

## The Fate of the Prisoner

If the party acquired the information by capturing a prisoner, they must decide what to do with them once they have the information they need. Letting him go could be risky as he could inform Enezga that they have been inquiring about the money. The only safe options are to kill him or take him back to Unnan as a prisoner of war.

## Raiding the Supply Lines

Intercepting all of the supply lines is not feasible but one or two assaults could reveal the information they need with minimal risk. Additionally, by taking a small shipment of money it could cause problems for Enezga. If the Ainu do not get paid then additional funds will need to be sent to Ryo or he risks losing some of his men.

Supply convoys are not easy to find. The best way of intercepting one is for the players to hide by one of the main roads and wait for one to pass by. The caravans are always guarded by several bands of bakemono. The party will be outnumbered when they attack but they will have the advantage of surprise. Stealth rolls should be made as necessary and if the ambush is successful, the players will gain surprise on the guards.

Each convoy is guarded by 1D2+1 bands with each band consisting of 1D4+4 bakemono (including the dai bakemono). The convoy will have one wagon per bakemono band.



## Fragile Loyalties



## Convoy Leaving Ryo

Searching the wagons from a convoy leaving Ryo, the players will discover food supplies and several chests of Ainu currency. Anyone examining the chests can make a Perception roll and if successful they will detect a faint smell of seawater. The coins are mainly silver but the chests do have some copper gold coins too.

## Convoy Heading Towards Ryo

Convoys heading into Ryo are much less frequent. They only contain food and other basic supplies, no money will be found. If the party have already ambushed wagons leaving Ryo they should be able to conclude that the money is arriving by sea.

For the first convoy they ambush heading in this direction, the players will discover a Japanese noble bound and secured inside one of the wagons. He is obviously a prisoner being taken to Ryo, no doubt to be interrogated by Enezga.

## Fujiwara Akiyoshi

Simple questioning will reveal the man to be Fujiwara Akiyoshi. Akiyoshi is a magistrate and he will say he was travelling through Iwami province on clan business when he was attacked and taken prisoner.

However, successful Perception rolls will reveal that he does not appear to have any injuries. If the players interrogate him further he will get a Persistence roll (33%) to resist any successful Influence check. Each time he fails he will divulge one piece of information as follows:

- ♣ He was on a mission to seek an audience with Enezga.
- ♣ The bakemono did not trust him so he was tied up and shoved into the wagon.
- ♣ The Fujiwara want to secretly aid Enezga to make it harder for the allied clans to achieve victory.
- ♣ By hindering the Minamoto and Taira, it will reduce their standing in the Imperial Court and minimise any influence gained from victory.

The players must then decide what to do with him. If they let him go he could still

complete his mission but if they kill him they will not have any evidence to prove that what he says is true. They could return him to Unnan but this would delay their mission and he could cause problems for them as they leave enemy territory.

If the party decides to keep him prisoner, Akiyoshi will attempt to escape at the earliest opportunity or failing that he will commit seppuku to the best of his ability, even if it means forcing the party to kill him.

## Enezga's Response

Once word gets to Enezga that his supply wagons are being intercepted, he will double the guard on them. This would mean that only a large force could overpower them and an attacking force that size can not pass through his lands without being noticed.

## Answers

Depending on which course of action the party takes and the questions they ask, the players will get the following answers if they have been successful in their methods. Remember, each question requires a separate Influence check or additional money to be paid as appropriate.

- ♣ Every week a shipment arrives at Ryo via boat. This information will only be known by those stationed near Ryo.
- ♣ The boat comes in from the south. This information will only be known to those stationed near Ryo.
- ♣ The boat is crewed by Japanese, there are no bakemono or Ainu on board. This will only be known to those stationed near Ryo.
- ♣ From Ryo, the money is sent in armed convoys to other main towns and strongholds.
- ♣ Those towns then distribute the money to mercenary captains under their control.
- ♣ The convoys are always guarded by several bakemono bands, never by Ainu.
- ♣ Bakemono guards are used because Enezga does not trust the Ainu enough with that much money. This information will only be known to dai bakemono.
- ♣ It is said that Sushigawa controls the Ainu money supply.
- ♣ No-one knows where the main stockpile is stored.

- It is rumoured that even Enezga himself does not know where Sushigawa keeps the money.
- Sushigawa was responsible for hiring the Ainu mercenaries to bolster Enezga's forces. This will only be known to Ainu.

## Sailing the Seas

One way or another, the players should eventually come to the conclusion that the money is arriving by sea and the only way to track it back to its source is to either ambush the ship near Ryo or follow it back once it has delivered a shipment.

The party will be given use of the *Sui Tatsu*, a small ship captained by Minamoto Kanamuchi, his crew and 10 samurai. Statistics for these characters are listed in Appendix I. Hirozaki gives the players a signed message to inform Kanamuchi that he is to take orders from the party. Since the money is being shipped in secret, one ship should be sufficient for the task ahead.

The *Sui Tatsu* sails from Yasamoto, a port town that is several hours' ride to the north. The journey to Yasamoto does take the party very close to enemy territory so you may include any encounters as appropriate from Appendix II for their journey by land and sea.

### The Sui Tatsu

Once the players arrive at Yasamoto, it is easy enough to find the *Sui Tatsu* (which literally means 'water dragon'). Read out the following:

*There are several ships docked at the port. Most are old and weathered but the Sui Tatsu stands out from the rest. It is a medium sized ship and is well maintained.*

*A well built man with a long braided pony tail strides the length of the deck. Shouting orders to the crew, they obey his command and carry out their tasks with military efficiency. Timbers are scrubbed, ropes are coiled and fixtures are polished. The man, who must be Kanamuchi, sees you watching but pays you no heed and continues working his crew.*

The players will need to approach Kanamuchi and give him the orders from Hirozaki before he will say much to them. Once he reads the message from Hirozaki he will acknowledge their superiority and defer to them.

Kanamuchi will order one of his crew to show the party to their cabins. The *Sui Tatsu* is a military vessel and not one of luxury. The cabins are small and cramped, each with two bunks so the players will have to share with at least one other person. If the players have a larger force with them some of the soldiers will have to bunk with the crew in the lower deck.

### Setting Sail

Kanamuchi always has his ship ready to set sail and will do so as soon as the party is ready to leave. Whatever the players plan to do, they will most likely have to set course somewhere south of Ryo so that they can intercept the enemy ship.

The journey will take just over a day and during that time the players will need to find a way to pass the time. If anyone has any boating experience, Kanamuchi will welcome their help and put them to work.

The ship has 25 crew members with a variety of personalities. Some are friendly and welcome passengers but some do not. Many of the unfriendly crew will relax their attitude to any player who helps out on board whilst others will see them as interfering with the way the ship is run.

### Finding the Ship

Once they are in position, the players will have to wait several days until the ship that they are after turns up. They will also need to make sure that they have the correct ship. They could follow at a discreet distance and see if it docks at Ryo then they can engage it on its return. However, if they want to liberate the money then this obviously not a viable solution.

Their only other option is to make contact with the ship. Since the people working for Sushigawa are doing so in secret, they will not want to be boarded as the money will be discovered. If they attempt to flee it will confirm their guilt to the players.

## Battle at Sea

The battle will most likely start with a chase as the enemy ship tries to escape. Unfortunately for them, the *Sui Tatsu* is much faster and will soon catch them up but if you want to add more interaction you can make Boating checks to see how quickly the *Sui Tatsu* catches up.

As the *Sui Tatsu* closes in on the enemy ship, the boarding party must be ready to act as Kanamuchi manouvers his ship alongside. Both sides will also exchange bow-fire making it dangerous for anyone exposed on deck. For any shots that hit, randomly determine if the players or any key characters get struck by the arrow.

When the ships are close enough, the boarding party will leap to the opposing ship and chaos will ensue as they engage the enemy. The enemy ship has 15 crew, 5 samurai and 10 ashigaru.

## Stowing Onboard the Ship

Although difficult, the party can attempt to stow away on the ship. Getting onboard will not be easy but can be done by swimming to the ship when it is docked at Ryo and climbing aboard. This is very dangerous and gaining access to Ryo harbour will not be as easy as it was before.

## Searching the Ship

If the players have control of the ship or have gained access without the crew knowing, they can search it for the money. It is not hidden and if the players look in the cargo hold they will see a dozen chests full of Ainu currency.

## Questioning the Crew

If the players are able to question any of the crew, the usual procedure applies. However, if this is following on from the battle then any survivors will jump overboard rather than face the disgrace of being caught.

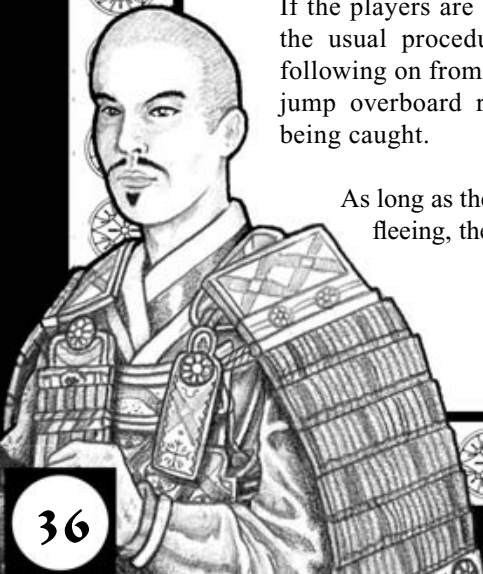
As long as they prevent at least one person from fleeing, they can learn any of the facts below


by asking the right questions. They only give minimal details and will never volunteer information. Separate Influence and Persistence rolls are required for each question.

- ✦ The Fusaki clan made a secret alliance with Sushigawa.
- ✦ Most of the Fusaki clan and villagers are unaware of this alliance.
- ✦ The ship operates out of the fishing village of Yayu.
- ✦ Fusaki Norimoto (the daimyo) is in charge of the operation acting under orders from Sushigawa.
- ✦ Only the daimyo, his chief advisors and the Bushi know the truth.
- ✦ The money is hidden in a secret cave in one of the nearby coves.
- ✦ A group of samurai are also hidden inside the cave to protect the money.

## Following the Ship

Following the ship back to its port of origin is easy, not being detected is hard. This will mainly rely on the





skills of Kanamuchi and his crew but if the players can help out it will increase their chances.

If they are discovered, the enemy ship will change course and anchor elsewhere. The players will then have to try another approach. If the *Sui Tatsu* manages to avoid detection, they will see their prey make port at Yayu.

## Yayu

Yayu is a fishing village located in the southern part of Iwami province and is dominated by the Fusaki clan. The Fusaki are a small clan allied with Minamoto but they are really working for Sushigawa.

Although many of their samurai help in the fight against Enezga, this is just a front so that the Fusaki can serve Sushigawa without suspicion. Most of Sushigawa's wealth is kept in Yayu and even Enezga does not know of this place. Each week, a ship is sent to Ryo to deliver a shipment of Ainu currency. From Ryo, Enezga then distributes it along his supply lines.

Yayu has several hundred villagers, most of whom are fishermen. There are also 5 samurai and 20 ashigaru (in addition to those on the ship and in the cove) who patrol the borders and keep the villagers safe. Some of the villagers will fight if necessary but most will shy away from combat. Statistics for the samurai and ashigaru can be found in Appendix I.

The principle characters in Yayu are Fusaki Norimoto (the daimyo), Ataru and Makato (advisors) and Junzo (samurai commander). Only these four and the warriors Junzo has selected for the task are aware of their true allegiance. Most of the villagers believe they are true allies to Minamoto, which makes the masquerade all the more effective.

## Arrival at Yayu

The players will most likely have found the Yayu by sea and they would have spent the last few days sailing here. If the *Sui Tatsu* makes port at Yayu then it will arouse the suspicion of the village as military vessels have no reason to stop here. This is not a good option since Norimoto may react to this; the party would be

heavily outnumbered in a straight fight should it result in violence.

The sensible option is to anchor the *Sui Tatsu* out of sight and row to shore. From there the party can take the road into the village. If they want to further avoid arousing attention they would also be advised to go in alone and leave the other soldiers with the *Sui Tatsu*. A small group just passing through will not be out of place.

There are several coves near the village, one of which has the secret cave with Sushigawa's money. If the players drop anchor at a cove, roll 1D6 and on a result of 6 they will unknowingly land at the right cove.

## The Money Cave

The money is hidden in a secret cave located in one of the coves near the village. The cave is extremely well hidden and can only be seen from the beach and requires a successful Perception check with a -50% penalty to be detected. Storing the money here makes it easy to load onto the ship without anyone noticing. The ship simply anchors nearby while the chests are taken over on smaller boats.

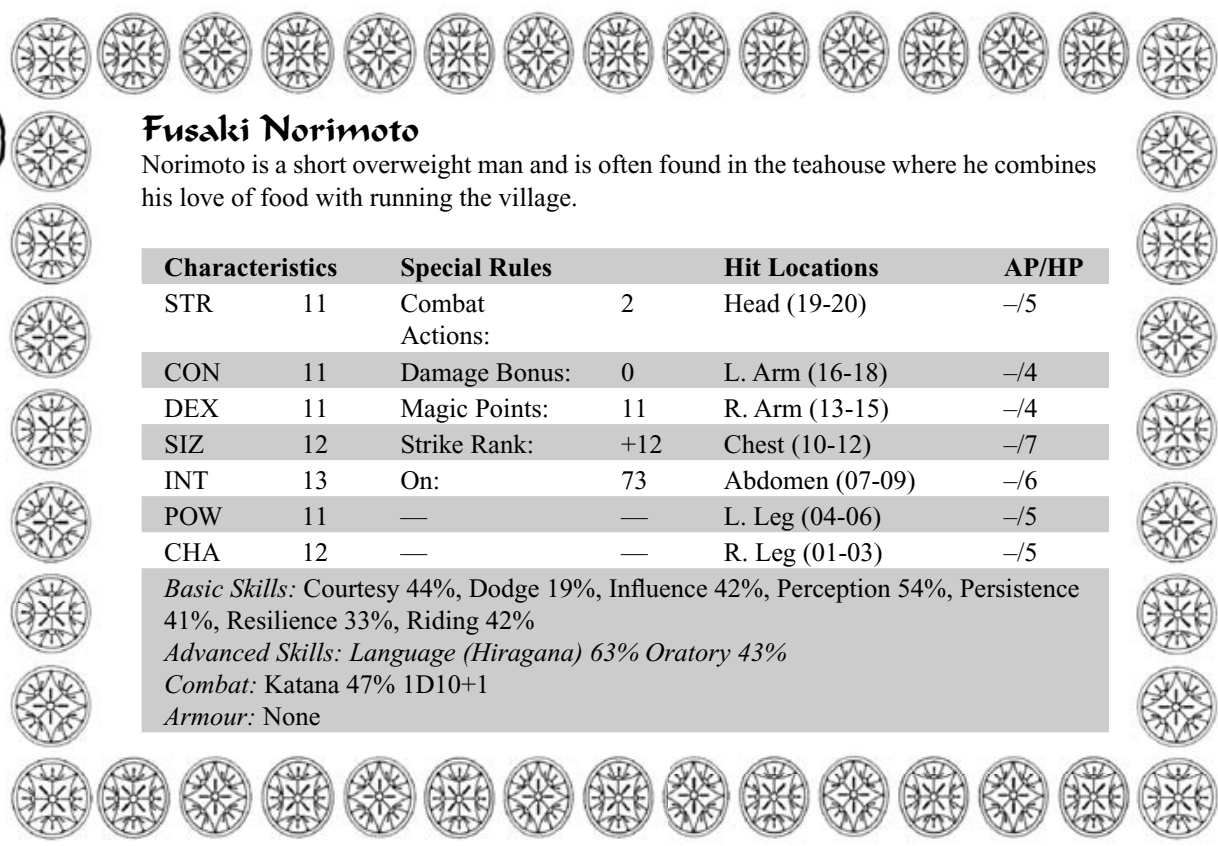
Secrecy is the key to this deception. Very few people come to this cove and hidden inside the cave are 10 samurai who guard Sushigawa's hoard. There are enough samurai to dispatch anyone who discovers the cave and few enough that nobody in the village or clan notices their absence, assuming they are on other duties.

Once the players find the cave and go inside, they will be ambushed by the guards unless they already know they are inside. The party will need the help of their support force or the crew of the *Sui Tatsu* if they are to win this fight.

Assuming they win, the players can question any survivors to find out who is in charge of this operation. The samurai will know the same information as the ship's crew described before.

## Exploring Yayu

Yayu will appear like a normal fishing village, which of course it is. One way to uncover the truth is to find



### Fusaki Norimoto

Norimoto is a short overweight man and is often found in the teahouse where he combines his love of food with running the village.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 11	Combat Actions:	2 Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 11	Damage Bonus:	0 L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 11	Magic Points:	11 R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 12	Strike Rank:	+12 Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 13	On:	73 Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 11	—	— L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 12	—	— R. Leg (01-03)	-/5
<i>Basic Skills:</i> Courtesy 44%, Dodge 19%, Influence 42%, Perception 54%, Persistence 41%, Resilience 33%, Riding 42%			
<i>Advanced Skills:</i> Language (Hiragana) 63% Oratory 43%			
<i>Combat:</i> Katana 47% 1D10+1			
<i>Armour:</i> None			

out who is in on the secret. Just like when they were in Miyako, the players must be careful how they go about this or they risk insulting the wrong people and could potentially lose On.

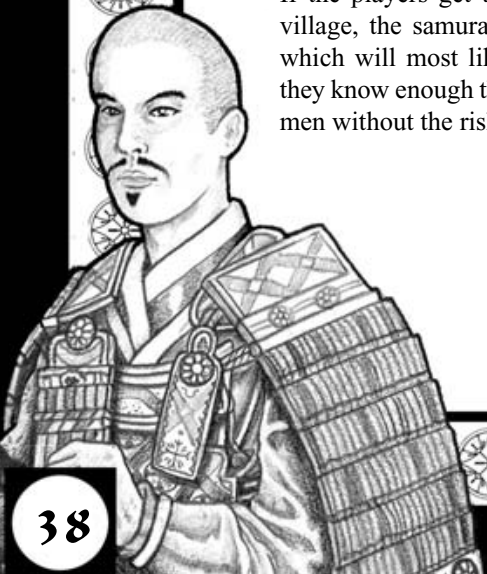
Depending on what the party already know, this could be as simple as following their leads or investigating further. If they need more information and they question the right people, they will learn more of the facts as already described.

If the players get too heavy handed and disrupt the village, the samurai and ashigaru may get involved, which will most likely result in a fight. However, if they know enough they can confront Norimoto and his men without the risk of dishonouring themselves.

### A Familiar Face

During their investigation of Yayu each player makes a Perception check. Anyone who succeeds will catch a glimpse of Yamasaki Eizo from the previous chapter. He will spot them and run out of sight. The players will no doubt want to chase him to find out why he is here.

Chasing Eizo is not easy. He is a quick runner and knows the village well. He will run down narrow streets and through buildings. Some of the villagers may intervene and slow down the players and the soldiers may also get involved. Once they catch him, they can question him to reveal any facts that they do not already know.





## Aftermath

A number of things can happen but assuming the players have been successful to some degree, they have some decisions to make.

Firstly, they must decide what to do with the money. This is entirely up to the players but keep in mind that even though the money is in Ainu currency, there is a fortune in those chests. If they enlisted the help of an Ainu group then they will have to pay them their share. The Ainu will honour the deal and leave once they have their money

They must also decide the fate of those who were working for Sushigawa. These people have dishonoured their family and clan by allying with the sorcerer and by proxy, Enezga too. The only real option these men have is to commit seppuku to avoid further dishonour for their family and clan. Most of the clan and villagers will be offended by the behaviour of their peers and will most likely support any decision the party makes.

Finally, they must decide what to do with Eizo. He has caused a lot of problems for the Minamoto and Taira clans and his loyalties clearly do not favour the fortunes of Japan. The players should give him the opportunity to commit seppuku but his cowardly instincts will mean he cannot go through with it.

## Reporting to Hirozaki

Once the players have completed their mission, they must return to Unnan. The quickest and safest

way is to return to Yasamoto on board the *Sui Tatsu* and from there ride to Unnan. The journey will take approximately five days by sea and then two hours ride to Unnan.

Once they arrive they can make their report. If the players have been successful, read out the following response from Hirozaki:

*'You have done well and your actions could well have turned the tide of this war in our favour. The result will not be immediate but we should slowly start to see a decrease in the number of Ainu in Enezga's forces.'*

*'You show great promise and once again you have redeemed yourselves.'*

As usual, the players have several months before the next chapter, giving them time to train or pursue any other story lines.

## Rewards

Completing this chapter gives the following rewards:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Cutting of the money supply	1 On
Uncovering the truth at Yayu	1 Hero Point
Defeating Eizo	1 improvement roll
Other roleplaying bonus/ penalty	GM determined



# CONFLICTS OF FAITH

*'No matter what it is, there is nothing that can not be done. If one manifests the determination, he can move heaven and earth as he pleases.'*

*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo*

With the supply of money cut off, the last six months have seen a steady decline in the Ainu. Without pay most have returned to their own lands but some have stayed, either unwilling or unable to get passage north. Enezga's army has dwindled but his bakemono are still great in number. Although a number of offensives have been successful, the war is far from over; however the lack of mercenaries has curtailed Enezga's advance.

The people of Japan are currently celebrating Ganjitsu as we move into the year 1,001 A.D. Hirozaki has given the players permission to join the fun of the three day festival in the Buddhist temple that is situated a short distance from Unnan.

## New Characters

If you need to bring in additional players or replacement characters, this is a great opportunity to do so. They can take the role of one of the defenders as detailed below. Fighting side by side is a great way to build trust, especially in a battle such as the one about to take place. The new character(s) could even have saved or been saved by, the other players.

In the same vein, you also have the opportunity to bring in a supporting NPC if you feel the party needs a bit more muscle. The journey ahead of them will be long and dangerous, so it is important to make sure that the party is strong enough to tackle the challenges ahead.

## Dirty Tactics

Give the players some time to enjoy the celebrations before reading the following:

*The festivities continue long into the night as many hope to witness the first dawn of the New Year in the surroundings of the temple. There is much food and drink to be had and everyone is enjoying themselves.*

*However, the laughter soon becomes screams and in an instant you are surrounded by chaos and bloodshed. The bakemono have attacked the Ganjitsu festival and are killing indiscriminately.*

Many of the people here are not fighters and are butchered as the bakemono cut swathes into the crowds. The players and other fighters must do their best to fight off the bakemono while the monks and festival goers run to safety. Being a religious festival, the players and other soldiers are unarmed and unprotected. Luckily there are sōhei present who form the main defensive line.

Seeing other fighters, the sōhei will pass them any spare weapons they have but it is not enough. Once the bakemono begin to fall the players can take their weapons. There is no way they can win this fight but if they can hold the line long enough, reinforcements will arrive from Unnan.

Include the following events randomly or by picking them as required. Make sure you have enough events before reinforcements arrive. You can even have two events at the same time so the players must decide which one to deal with.

1D10 Roll	Event
1-2	The Fight Continues
3	Grab the Child
4	Hold the Line
5	Organise the People
6	Protect the Monk
7	Save the Soldiers
8	Stop the Thief
9	Take Command
0	Reinforcements



### The Fight Continues

Nothing special happens; the players continue to fight off the bakemono.

### Grab the Child

A small child sits alone. Several bakemono see the crying child and rush towards it. The players must save the child and get it to safety.

### Hold the Line

With the defenders reacting to the chaos around them, a gap opens in the line. If the hole is not closed the bakemono will break through and the fight will be lost.

### Organise the People

People are fleeing in all directions. Some fall and are being trampled, others are running into the fight. Lives could be saved if someone organised the retreat. This is a good option to pick for any of the players who do not have fighting professions.

### Protect the Monk

A monk is being cruelly beaten by some bakemono. They continue to kick his curled up body and he will soon be dead if the party does not intervene.

### Save the Soldiers

A soldier (or group of soldiers) is being overpowered by the bakemono. If the players can get to them with some weapons (from fallen bakemono or sōhei ) they can save them and strengthen their defences with the additional fighters.

### Stop the Thief

A dishonourable individual takes advantage of the situation and starts looting the dead. Sickened by this act, the players will want to dispense justice.

### Take Command

With so many things going on around the defenders and nobody in command, the defence is weak. If the defence is to hold, someone needs to take command.

### Reinforcements

After a long and difficult battle, reinforcements arrive from Unnan. This quickly turns the tide of battle and soon the bakemono will flee.

### Aftermath

When the battle is over, all that remains is a sea of bodies and blood. Over half the original defenders lost their lives and many others received serious or crippling injuries. Any players able to administer first aid will be very busy.

Whilst most of the bakemono were fighting, others set about defiling the temple and butchering the dead. This was not a tactical offensive but an attack to demoralise the people. Hirozaki can be seen pacing the battlefield, clearly angered by this foul tactic.

### A Mission of Faith

As the wounded are tended to and the dead are buried, Hirozaki approaches the players.

*'This is a terrible day. Enezga has struck a deadly blow to our people but as shameful as this sounds, we must make the most of it.'*

*'Until now, the priests have refused to involve their sōhei in the war. For both religious and defensive reasons, the warrior monks have remained at the temples but this attack changes everything.'*

*'You have redeemed yourselves well this last year and you have proven to be very resourceful. You are to travel to Nara and seek an audience with Natsui; he is a friend of Minamoto and the abbot of the Horyu-ji temple complex. I will have a letter written so he knows I have sent you personally and that you represent my interests.'*

### The Road to Nara

Nara is a few days ride south of Miyako, four days ride from Unnan. With the recent bakemono attacks on temples and shrines, encountering them on the way to Nara is a certainty. The players must be mindful and alert.

The players will come across survivors of similar bakemono attacks who were celebrating in small villages or near shrines. Children will be orphaned, parents have lost their young and priests question their faith that such acts could take place on such a holy day.



Many of the survivors will have nowhere to go so the players can take them to Nara where they can be looked after and their injuries can be treated. Since the refugees are on foot and injured, the journey to Nara will take much longer.

As they continue their journey, the bakemono, acting on orders from Enezga, will attack the refugees. Not only are they an easy target but it will further demoralise the people of Japan. The players will have a hard time defending and more innocent lives will be lost.

After a long and gruelling journey, the party will arrive at Nara. Monks and priests will

attend to the injured and the refugees will be granted sanctuary in the temples. The players will be thanked and will be directed to the Horyu-ji Temple. Read out the following:

*You make your way through the old capital, now a town of magnificent Buddhist Temples and beautiful Shinto Shrines. The skyline is broken by towering pagodas and ancient trees. The awe of the city is somewhat diminished by the throngs of refugees from the recent bakemono attacks. The temples are overflowing and the streets are crammed.*

*You slowly make your way through the crowds as you head to the southern part of the city. Eventually you arrive at the Horyu-ji Temple Complex where priests and monks are busy attending to the refugees filling the courtyard.*

## Horyu-ji Temple Complex


Horyu-ji is one of the Nanto Shichi Daiji, 'the Seven Great Temples of Nara'. It is a large complex situated in the south of the city. The players must seek an audience with Natsui. If they ask one of the nearby monks they will apologise, saying that the zasu (abbot) is very busy and is not receiving visitors.

Only after producing the letter from Hirozaki will they be allowed to meet with the abbot. The party will be lead into the main building and asked to wait. The monk will then walk off with the letter and return several minutes later to usher them into Natsui's study.

## Meeting Natsui

Natsui is an old man with white hair and a long beard. With recent events he has been rushed off his feet and he looks very tired. He will greet the players and ask them to sit. The players must now explain their situation and request his help. Once they have made their case, read out the following reply from Natsui:

*'I understand your position but recent hostilities between the Shingo and Tendai sects mean that we must keep our sōhei in defence of the temples and that was before these recent attacks from the bakemono.'*



The hostilities between the two Buddhist sects will probably be news to the players. Hopefully the players will enquire about this but if they do not, Natsui will continue anyway.

*'The clerical ranks within the Tendai sect are increasingly being given to those of noble birth and Imperial standing rather than on the merits of the individuals.'*

*'We voiced our concerns about this, not only out of compassion for fellow Buddhists but because we fear the government may pressure us to do the same. They do, after all, maintain the temples and our way of life. Unfortunately, our involvement in this was a catalyst for the conflict as the Tendai did not take kindly to us interfering.'*

*'If you want the support of the temples and the sōhei, this issue must be resolved. The main temple of the Tendai sect is Enryaku-ji near Mount Hiei. Perhaps you could journey there and speak to the abbot. You are here on the authority of Minamoto no Hirozaki and if the Tendai understand the situation and are willing to talk, then perhaps some sort of resolution can be reached.'*

Unknown to any of the parties involved, Sushigawa and his ninja agents have been manipulating this situation. He knows that if the sōhei join the forces of the Minamoto and Taira then Enezga's army would be outnumbered. By keeping the sōhei tied up he can be certain that they will not join the clans in an all out offensive.

## Ambassadors of Faith

The players should realise that the only hope of getting sōhei reinforcements is to do as Natsui has suggested. They must journey to Enryaku-ji at Mount Hiei. It is one days ride from here and lies on the north east border of Miyako. The temple overlooks Miyako so the players would have seen it when they visited the capital previously.

Once they arrive at the foot of the mountain, they must travel through the forested mountain trail that leads up to the temple complex. Enryaku-ji is a jinaimachi, a

temple town. It is a vast complex much bigger than any in Nara. There are refugees here but due to its location and access it is not overflowing like the temples the players have visited recently.

The main temple complex commands a stunning view of the landscape and capital city below. The serenity and relative isolation of this place is enough to forget about the war and recent atrocities, at least for a moment anyway.

The players will be able to arrange an audience with the abbot and the high ranking clergy. The meeting will take place in a simple but well landscaped garden area. The abbot, Shiro, is old and wise. Several of the clergy are clearly from a noble background, wearing expensive kimonos of simple design. Their manner is also noticeably different as they demand the deference to their rank, whereas the other monks seem to attract a genuine respect. This is quite subtle and will only be noticed on a successful Perception roll.

Many of the clergy feel insulted by the accusations made against them by the Shingo sect and stubbornly refuse to acknowledge that a misunderstanding has taken place. Shiro is more open to what the players have to say but as the discussion continues, it will become evident that the abbot's role seems more ceremonial and the high ranking clergy seem to be making the important decisions.

As the situation here becomes apparent, the players should be concerned. Moreover, they should be wondering how such a state of affairs has come to be. Some of the clergy's reactions border on irrational. Before the players can talk sense into these people they must determine what is motivating them to behave the way they are.

## Sushigawa's Hold

After the Shingo sect voiced their concerns, Sushigawa saw an opportunity to turn the situation to his advantage. He investigated the high ranking clergy and determined which ones he could manipulate to keep the tensions high with the Shingo sect. Sushigawa does not directly contact these people; he has his ninjas for tasks like that.



### Asai Jotaro

The Asai family (allied to Minamoto) have acted shamefully in the past by employing the services of sorcerers on several occasions, one of whom was Sushigawa himself before he journeyed to Hokkaido. Sushigawa has threatened to reveal the family secret, thus disgracing them, if Jotaro did not do as asked. Seeing no real threat from Sushigawa's request, Jotaro obeyed to protect his family's honour.

### Taira Michimoto

Michimoto's younger brother has been taken captive by Sushigawa. As long as tensions remained between the Tendai and the Shingo sects, his brother would be kept alive. Michimoto loves his brother and will do anything to protect him. Since he does not know where he is being held prisoner, he has reluctantly been influencing the conflict with the Shingo.

If the party approaches Jotaro or Michimoto privately they can attempt to find out the truth. Jotaro and Michimoto will of course be reluctant to reveal their secrets but if the players are convincing enough, the two troubled clergy will confide in the players. How much information they reveal will depend on how persuasive the party are and of course they will insist that the party keep the information to themselves.

It is important to realise that this is not a situation for interrogation but one of compassion. The party will not know enough to make accusations, so the players must appeal to these people and try to help them.

Jotaro and Michimoto both know they have acted dishonourably but they cannot move against Sushigawa. They know he has other agents working for him but they are not sure who (they are not even aware of each other's connection to the sorcerer). The players will have no way of knowing if there are any others under Sushigawa's control.

### Dilemma

Once more the players are in a dilemma of ethics against honour and secrets against reputation. It would seem that Sushigawa has a tight hold on the situation and it can only be resolved by his death.

If the players were to reveal Sushigawa's involvement now, they could not be sure of the consequences. What other hold does he have over the Tendai? They must speak to Natsui about this.

### Return to Nara

The players will return to Nara and speak with Natsui. If they were successful, read out the following:

*'This is troubling indeed. You were right in coming to me. For now this must remain a secret. Until we know more we cannot predict the consequences if this were to become common knowledge.'*

*'It would seem that the only solution to this problem is to find Sushigawa and remove his control over these people. Sushigawa must be stopped, not just for the sake of the temples but for your war too. Without the sorcerer, Enezga would be weakened.'*

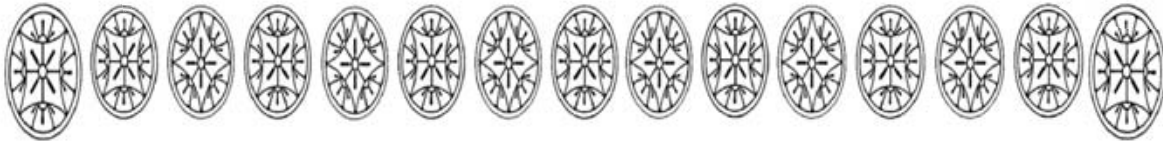
*'Sushigawa is very powerful and cannot be defeated by arms alone but without his magic he is just a man. There may be a way...'*

*'Natsui walks over to a bookshelf and starts looking for something. He pulls out a parchment and hands it to you.'*

*'This is the Legend of the Elemental Blades. I have been researching this ancient myth for some time now and I am certain there is some truth to it. If you could find the blades I believe they could be used to confront Sushigawa.'*

The parchment contains the story of the Legend of the Elemental Blades. Natsui has put this together from various sources and within the story are clues to finding the blades. You can read this to the players or if you prefer they can read it for themselves from the handout.

If the players ask why the blades were scattered, Natsui will explain that Emperor Heizei abdicated the throne because he was suffering from depression. His mood swings would often result in irrational decisions and orders. Natsui does not know any more than this but he will continue his research and inform the players if he discovers any new information.



## The Legend of the Elemental Blades



Long ago when sorcerers roamed free, the people of Japan lived in fear. Many had been seduced and influenced by the sorcerers' ways and there was no force that could stop them.



Emperor Kammu called for the greatest sword smiths to forge five superior blades. Five priests then petitioned their local kami to work their magic upon the blades, one for each of the elements of earth, water, fire, wind and heaven.



These blades each held aspects of their element but when all are used in a common cause the wielders were protected from magic.



The Emperor gave each of the swords to his five finest warriors who hunted down and slew many sorcerers. Many years later when Emperor Heizei abdicated, he ordered the five warriors to scatter the elemental blades throughout the lands.



The warrior of water headed north east to a fortified town by the great lake but was killed by a beast in the mountains shortly after.



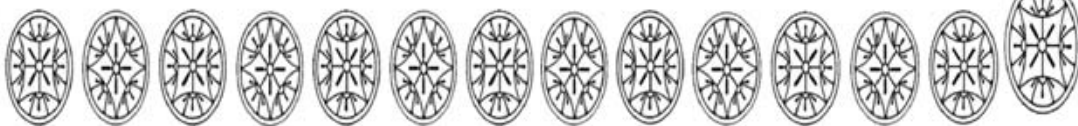
The brothers of Earth and Fire were to travel east to the mountain of fire, then to the great mountain in the south. Their fate is unknown but they never returned from the east.

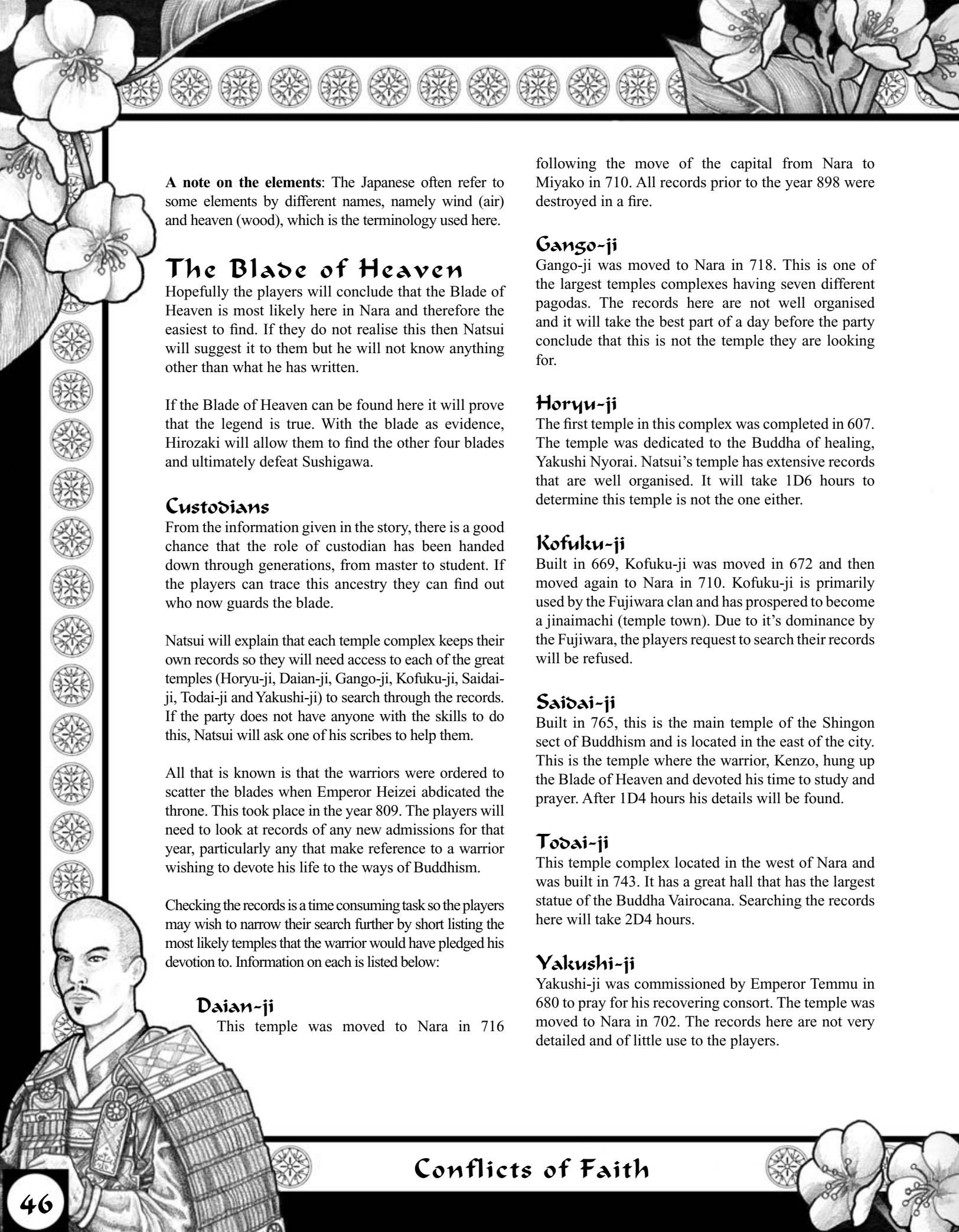


The warrior of Wind journeyed to the northern island of the barbarian people. Not understanding their ways, he climbed the tallest mountain to meditate on the matter. It is believed he still sits there to this day.



The warrior of Heaven took his blade to the holy city and devoted his life to studying Buddhism. He remained custodian of the blade for many years until he handed it down to his student.





**A note on the elements:** The Japanese often refer to some elements by different names, namely wind (air) and heaven (wood), which is the terminology used here.

## The Blade of Heaven

Hopefully the players will conclude that the Blade of Heaven is most likely here in Nara and therefore the easiest to find. If they do not realise this then Natsui will suggest it to them but he will not know anything other than what he has written.

If the Blade of Heaven can be found here it will prove that the legend is true. With the blade as evidence, Hirozaki will allow them to find the other four blades and ultimately defeat Sushigawa.

### Custodians

From the information given in the story, there is a good chance that the role of custodian has been handed down through generations, from master to student. If the players can trace this ancestry they can find out who now guards the blade.

Natsui will explain that each temple complex keeps their own records so they will need access to each of the great temples (Horyu-ji, Daian-ji, Gango-ji, Kofuku-ji, Saidai-ji, Todai-ji and Yakushi-ji) to search through the records. If the party does not have anyone with the skills to do this, Natsui will ask one of his scribes to help them.

All that is known is that the warriors were ordered to scatter the blades when Emperor Heizei abdicated the throne. This took place in the year 809. The players will need to look at records of any new admissions for that year, particularly any that make reference to a warrior wishing to devote his life to the ways of Buddhism.

Checking the records is a time consuming task so the players may wish to narrow their search further by short listing the most likely temples that the warrior would have pledged his devotion to. Information on each is listed below:

### Daian-ji

This temple was moved to Nara in 716

following the move of the capital from Nara to Miyako in 710. All records prior to the year 898 were destroyed in a fire.

### Gango-ji

Gango-ji was moved to Nara in 718. This is one of the largest temples complexes having seven different pagodas. The records here are not well organised and it will take the best part of a day before the party conclude that this is not the temple they are looking for.

### Horyu-ji

The first temple in this complex was completed in 607. The temple was dedicated to the Buddha of healing, Yakushi Nyorai. Natsui's temple has extensive records that are well organised. It will take 1D6 hours to determine this temple is not the one either.

### Kofuku-ji

Built in 669, Kofuku-ji was moved in 672 and then moved again to Nara in 710. Kofuku-ji is primarily used by the Fujiwara clan and has prospered to become a jinaimachi (temple town). Due to it's dominance by the Fujiwara, the players request to search their records will be refused.

### Saidai-ji

Built in 765, this is the main temple of the Shingon sect of Buddhism and is located in the east of the city. This is the temple where the warrior, Kenzo, hung up the Blade of Heaven and devoted his time to study and prayer. After 1D4 hours his details will be found.

### Todai-ji

This temple complex located in the west of Nara and was built in 743. It has a great hall that has the largest statue of the Buddha Vairocana. Searching the records here will take 2D4 hours.

### Yakushi-ji

Yakushi-ji was commissioned by Emperor Temmu in 680 to pray for his recovering consort. The temple was moved to Nara in 702. The records here are not very detailed and of little use to the players.

## Kenzo's Students

Once the party have found Kenzo's details in the Saidai-ji records, they can find out who his student was and follow the line of master to student relationships. Following this line of enquiry they can determine who the current custodian is. It will take another 1D6 hours to find the name that they need.

Nagayoshi was, until recently, the student of Yukimori. Yukimori is getting old and Nagayoshi has now become a fully ordained monk. If the players ask around they will be directed to a small garden where Nagayoshi is talking to Yukimori.

Both Nagayoshi and Yukimori will look astounded when they hear the players have tracked them down to find the Blade of Heaven. Nagayoshi will ask for Yukimori's advice but Yukimori will simply say that only the custodian can make the decision. Nagayoshi will be reluctant to give the party the blade but if they mention Natsui's involvement he can eventually be persuaded as long as the players explain their intentions.

If asked about the other blades, Nagayoshi and Yukimori do not have any additional information that can help the players.

## The Blade of Heaven

This exquisite katana has been expertly crafted giving a +5% Kenjutsu bonus. The grip is wrapped with black silk sageo and engraved along the blade are the words 'The faithful shall heal'.

The blade has the following enchantments:

- ♣ **Heal:** By expending 1 Magic Point, the wielder can heal 1 Hit Point to any target by touching the injured area with the tip of the blade.
- ♣ **Weaponblessing:** Gives the blade a further +5% Kenjutsu and +1 damage bonus.
- ♣ **Magical Resistance:** As one of the elemental blades it grants the wielder +5% to all magic resistance rolls (Dodge, Persistence and Resilience) and an additional +5% resistance for every other elemental blade within 50 feet that is being wielded by an ally.
- ♣ **Conditions:** The magical effects of this blade are only available if the wielder is religious (anyone who follows the Buddhist or Shinto faith).







## Using the Elemental Blades

As the players obtain each blade they will not automatically know what they do and how to use them. Anyone testing a blade will notice that it is very well balanced and will soon know it increases their skill when using it.

If the character meets the requirements for the enchantments to take effect, they will feel a 'connection' with the blade as the magical properties are activated. They will get a feeling that additional powers can be used by expending Magic Points but until they actually do so they will not know what the spell does. Try to make this interesting so the more they use it the more they understand its capabilities.

To anyone who does not meet the conditions, it will just seem like a well crafted but normal katana.

## Reporting to Hirozaki

When the players explain their visit to Natsui and show him the blade, Hirozaki will reply as follows:

*'If this legend is true, which the blade seems to prove, then it seems that much rests on them being found. You have my permission to find these blades and see this through to the end.'*

*'Our resources are spread thin at the moment so I cannot give you any men to aid you in your quest. However, should you need his services; Minamoto Kanamuchi will take you anywhere you may need to go on the Sui Tatsu.'*

*'When you have found all you can return back to me. In the meantime, report to Natsui as I will be of little help in this matter.'*

The players now have a degree of freedom as they track down the remaining four elemental blades. These can be done in any order and the players may take time out to train or deal with any other business they may have.

To find each blade, the players will need more information so they must return to Natsui for each one they wish to find.

## Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are as follows:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Defending the temple	1 On
Rescuing refugees	1 Hero Point
Uncovering the conflict	1 improvement roll
Finding the Blade of Heaven	1 Hero Point
Other roleplaying bonus/penalty	GM determined



# THE BLADE OF WATER

'By knowing the large, you know the small; and from the shallow, you reach the deep.'

*The Book of Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi*

Natsui will need a few weeks to finish his research on the Blade of Water. He will suggest that the players use the time to rest and get any supplies they need as they will have a long journey ahead of them. When he is ready, he will relay the following information:

*'The great lake mentioned in the story most likely refers to Lake Biwa, which is the large lake north east of Miyako. I have also found several references to a small fort town, Mutachi, located in a valley on the northern tip of the lake.'*

*The Mutachi fort was built to keep out bandits who commonly raided the town during the last century. A few years ago part of the fort fell when an earthquake shook the region but other than that I have not been able to find anything of interest. Perhaps local folklore may reveal more information.'*

## Trouble in Mutachi

It will take a day to ride to Mutachi. Since it lays in the opposite direction to Iwami province the players are unlikely to encounter any enemy forces. When the party is near to their destination, read out the following:

*You ride down into a valley and see Fort Mutachi silhouetted against the immense Lake Biwa. A fortified wall buttressed by two towers expands the width of the valley protecting about 50 houses within. One of the towers has collapsed but you can see it is in the process of being rebuilt. At the southern end of the town you can see several small fishing boats tied to several wooden jetties.*

*As you ride closer to the town, your instincts stop you. Something is not right here. What should be a bustling fishing town seems quiet and deserted.*

Nothing else can be determined from where they are. They must get nearer to the town to find out why it is so quiet.

## A Town Held Captive

A group of ronin who have recently been joined by some Ainu mercenaries have taken control of the town. Both the ronin and Ainu have a common enemy in the people and government of Japan. The ronin are without masters and the Ainu have no way home. Both groups have allied together and have occupied Mutachi, forcing its inhabitants to work for and service them as they see fit. Statistics for ronin and mercenaries can be found in Appendix I.

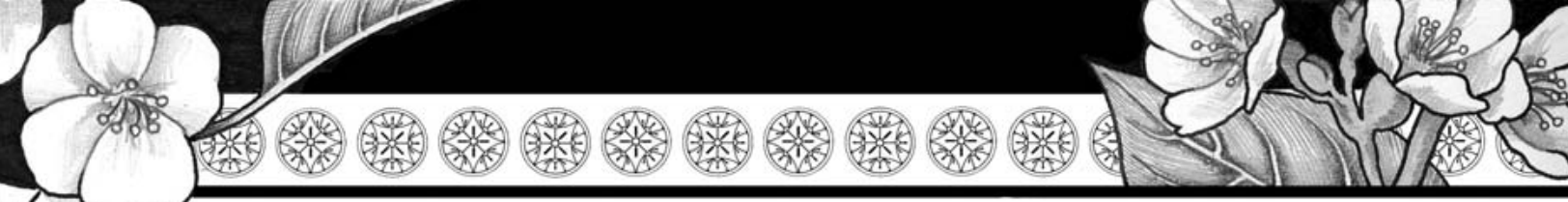
To prevent anyone from leaving they have guards posted at the towers and gate. When the fishermen are sent out on the lake, they are told that their families will be killed if they try to escape. The townsfolk are currently living a life in fear of being beaten, used and abused by their captors.

Although the people of the town greatly outnumber the bandits, they are fearful of them as many lost family when the group attacked. All of the guards defending the town have been killed and there are no experienced fighters left to stand up to the ronin or Ainu.

There are seven ronin, five Ainu soldiers, three Ainu warriors and an Ainu captain. United in their common cause, both the ronin and Ainu work well together and friendships have even been forged between the two groups.

The walls and towers are always guarded by at least four men but they stay out of sight and study any who approach. As the players draw near the town, the guards will see that this is a group of experienced fighters (unlike those they killed when they took the town) and one of the ronin will shout to them:

*'This town has been deserted and now belongs to us. You are not welcome here. Leave now.'*



If the party does not turn and leave then one of the guards will fire a warning shot. If the players try to communicate they will be met with the same response. This is the last warning that the guard will give and if the players still do not leave, all of the guards will open fire.

If the players have any sense about them they will back off and discuss their options. This town is the only lead they have and they need to get inside to investigate. They do not know the fate of the townsfolk and they do not know the numbers of the enemy. To do so, they will need to get inside.

## Breaching the Defences

There are several ways of getting inside the town, each with its own merits and risk.

### Reconnaissance

A stealthy reconnaissance mission would help determine the number and capabilities of the enemy occupying the town. This would also confirm if there are any hostages inside as well.

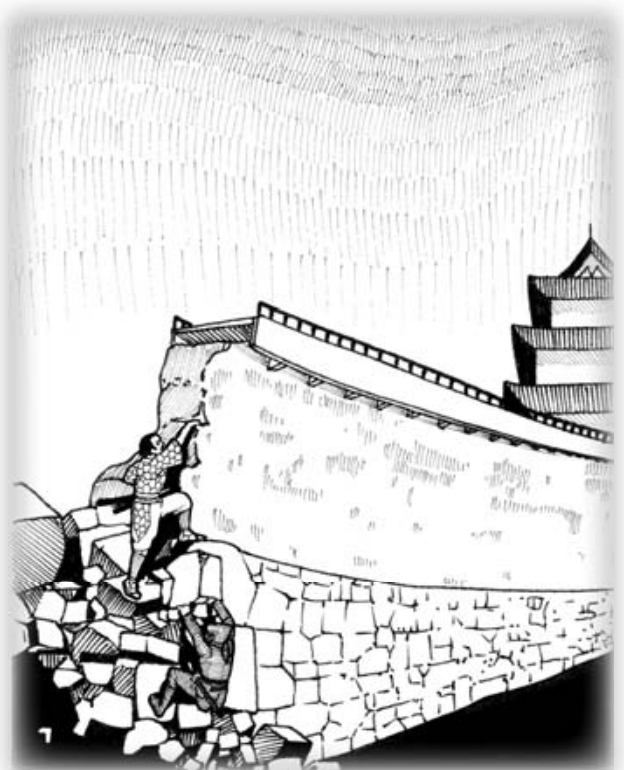
To increase the chances of success, only the most skilled should attempt this but some methods of entry will be more suitable for the entire party. The various ways into the town are detailed below.

### The Broken Tower

The rocks and rubble at the base of this tower make it relatively quick and easy to climb. If this is attempted at night there is a good chance one or two people could get in undetected. However, the bandits know the party might be out there so they will be watching and alert for any such attempt.

Doing this requires an Athletics check (+20%) and Stealth check to avoid being spotted. Climbing any other part of the fort has a -10% penalty. Once on top of the tower, a second Stealth and Athletics check are required to get down the other side.

Due to lack of cover, there will not be any guards on the broken tower but they will be situated along the wall and in the opposite tower.

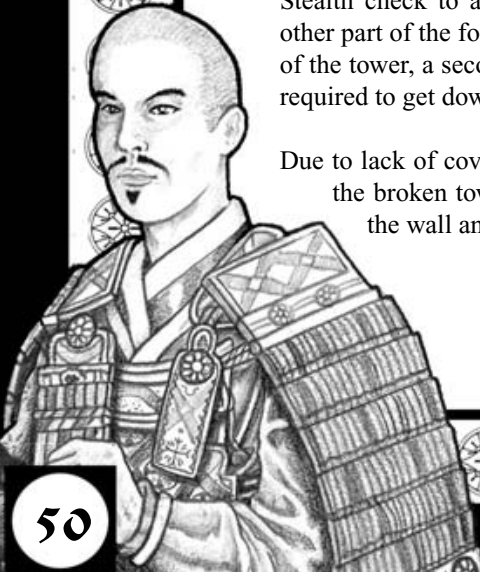


### The Valley

Although difficult and dangerous, it is possible to climb down from either side of the valley. The players must be warned that this is not an easy task and if they should fall, it could result in serious injury or even death.

It will take four hours to walk up the valley. The terrain is very rough and uneven, which slows their progress and prevents them from bringing their horses. Alternatively, they could climb up the valley near the fort but the bandits will most likely see them and can monitor their progress.

Once the players reach a spot overlooking the town they can begin their descent. Climbing down the steep incline is a slow and difficult process. Three separate Athletics checks are required, each with a -10% penalty (unless the players had the foresight to bring some rope). If they attempt this at night they get a further 20% penalty.





## The Lake

It would take the best part of a day to ride around the valley but it would allow access to others areas of the lake. From there they can swim or find a boat to get to the harbour of Mutachi.

## Swimming

If the players decide to swim, they will not be able to do so with their armour and will only be able to take small, light weapons. They have to cover a lot of distance and several swimming rolls must be made. Due to the distance involved, each roll has a cumulative -10% penalty. A failed roll means that they have not made any progress, a critical failure means they lose control and begin to drown.

## Finding a Boat

Finding a boat is largely dependant on luck. However, if the players follow the shore around they will eventually find a fishing town or village. For each hour of searching, they get a cumulative 5% chance to find a boat (starting at 5%). Once they have found a boat, it most likely belongs to someone so they will need to persuade the owner to loan or sell the boat if they are to obtain it through honourable means.

When the players arrive at the harbour, there is a 20% chance that the bandits have sent out a few boats to catch some fish. If this is the case, there will be two or three bandits standing at the harbour watching the boats. The fishermen will continue for about an hour before returning with their catch.

## Frontal Assault

This is a very dangerous move as they are attacking a fortified town with an unknown number of opponents. Although the guards will reveal themselves when they shoot at the party, they will still have good cover and Perception checks will be needed for the players to see where the guards are firing from.

The party will also have the problem of breaching the fort. The only viable options are climbing the tower (as described above) or attempting to smash the gates; which would be next to impossible.

## Exploring the Town

Once some or all of the party are inside the town they can now look around to assess the situation. To remain undetected, Stealth rolls will be required as they move around the town.

For the most part, the streets are deserted. All of the townsfolk stay in their houses unless they are ordered to come out. Some of the bandits occasionally walk the streets to make sure that everyone is where they should be.

If the party study the situation long enough, they will see that the bandits on guard duty are relieved every 4 to 5 hours. During the day, the bandits supervise the townsfolk for any chores that need doing such as fishing, farming the rice paddies and so on.

Counting the number of bandits is difficult as they move around. Anyone attempting to determine how many there are should make several Perception rolls as they watch the enemy movements. If all rolls are successful then they will count the correct number with reasonable accuracy. For each roll they fail they will miscount by 1D4 bandits.

## Houses

The bandits have such fear over their captives that they have not bothered securing them (except the troublemakers as described below). Apart from a few households that have been evicted so the bandits have somewhere to sleep, the rest of the townsfolk have been allowed to stay in their houses. The houses taken over by the bandits are either near the fort or the harbour.


If the players search the houses they will most likely find a family living there, too afraid to come out. If the players approach any of the townsfolk they will think the players are more ronin come to abuse the people of Mutachi. If the players can convince them otherwise, the inhabitants will explain what has been going on here and that they have been held captive for several months now.

# Mutachi



- Key
1. Rice Paddy
  2. Shrine
  3. Tea House
  4. House





The party may also ask about the Blade of Water but the people are too distracted to think about anything else. Perhaps once the situation here has been resolved, someone may be able to help the players.

If the players persist, they will be told that Imoto would know of such things and they will be given directions to his house. If the party decide not to help the townsfolk, you can skip to the Blade of Water section. Most of the events will happen in the same way, except they will have to steal a boat and find a priest if needed.

### **The Tea House**

The only place that exhibits any sign of life is the tea house. The bandits who are not currently on guard duty spend most of their time here. However, they tend to favour saki over tea. The bandits order the owners of the tea house to provide food and drink whilst they sit around playing games of strategy and chance. At any one time, there will be 1D6 bandits in the tea house.

### **The Harbour & Paddy Fields**

The rice paddies are situated close to the harbour. They are small but with the fish caught from the lake there is sufficient food to feed the population of Mutachi. This area is occasionally patrolled at night but other than that it is only guarded when the townsfolk are fishing and farming.

### **The Shrine**

Situated near the paddy fields is a small shrine. The shrine is big enough for several people to stand in and provides good cover should the players need to hide from any passing guards. The people of Mutachi are so scared to leave their houses that the shrine is rarely used. Only the priest, Yujio, prays at the shrine every morning to ensure the local kami does not abandon them.

### **The Prison**

One of the houses near the harbour has been converted to a makeshift prison to hold the troublemakers, those who have defied the bandits or tried to fight back. The house has been locked and boarded up and is guarded by two people at all times.

There are currently three people locked inside. If freed, they will gladly help the party to drive the bandits out of their town but they will need to be provided with weapons and armour.

## **Liberating the Town**

Once the players know what is going on and who they are dealing with they can discuss a way to free the people of Mutachi. Since the party is heavily outnumbered, they will need to plan carefully and thoroughly. Gaining the help of the prisoners will help to even the odds a little.

The main advantages that the players have are that of surprise and also the fact that the bandits are spread around the town. However, once they attack anyone, the bandits will shout for help and the rest will join the fight.

If the bandits think that they are losing, some will flee if they fail a Persistence check. Others will take hostages and threaten to kill them if they are not allowed to leave. Those with hostages will drag their victims with them and the players must pursue them if the hostages are to be saved.

Other tactics include barricading the bandits inside the buildings (such as the tea house) and causing distractions to keep the enemy off balance. The use of fire should be discouraged as not only could that result in the loss of innocent life but it could also destroy many buildings and boats.

## **The Blade of Water**

Once the bandits have been killed or driven off, the townsfolk will thank the party and offer them food and gifts. They will also attend to any of the injured. Once life has settled back to normal, the players can resume their quest to find the Blade of Water.

If the players ask around, they will be told that Imoto would be the best person to talk to as he knows a lot of local myths and legends.



## Prisoners

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 12	Combat Actions: 2	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 12	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 11	Magic Points: 10	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 13	Strike Rank: +11	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 11	On: 28	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 10	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 13	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 33%, Boating 47%, Courtesy 29%, Dodge 28%, Perception 31%, Persistence 20%, Resilience 32%

*Advanced Skills:* Shiphandling 41%

*Combat:* Kenjutsu 33%

*Armour:* None



## Meeting Imoto

Imoto is an elderly man who spends most of his time sitting in his modest house. He is always glad of company and the opportunity to tell his stories. After the players explain what they know, Imoto will reply as follows:

*'Yes, there is an old story of a man who came to our town 200 years ago. He was a warrior, a loyal servant of Emperor Heizei. The legend says he went to the Stone of Prosperity and communed with the kami there.*

*The warrior then rowed out into the lake. He drew his katana for the last time and after a few moments of contemplation; he placed it on the water and watched it sink below the surface.*

*He then returned to the stone to thank the kami for her help. Unfortunately, now unarmed, the warrior was attacked and killed by a mukade living in the mountain. No-one has been there since for fear of being killed by the monster.'*

If the players enquire further, Imoto will explain that the Stone of Prosperity can be found by walking south along the lake shore. If they are to find the Blade of Water, they must speak with the kami of the stone. However, they must be mindful of the creature that prowls the area. If the party does not have a priest, Yujio will go with them and speak to the kami on their behalf.

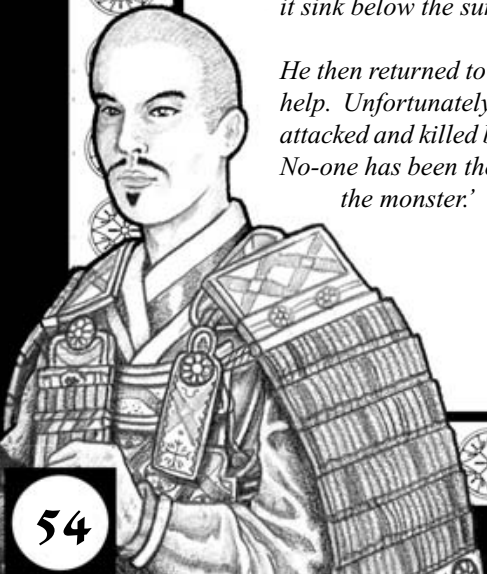
## The Stone of Prosperity

Following the directions from Imoto, the party will find the Stone of Prosperity after several hours of walking along the lake edge. The Stone of Prosperity is a boulder roughly four feet in diameter. It sits in a small, lush meadow between the lake and the mountain and is surrounded by wild flowers.

This would be a place of beauty and tranquillity but other than the flowers there is no wild life here. No animals can be seen anywhere nearby and there is an air of foreboding about the place.

## The Mukade

The Mukade has been here for centuries although it has spent much of that time hibernating, coming out



## The Blade of Water



every few years to feed. The Mukade waits to attack its prey when they are at their most vulnerable and makes a surprise attack. If the party stops to rest or begin praying to the kami the Mukade will attack them and gain surprise.

If the players are wise enough to hunt it down first, they will find it in the rocks nearby. The Mukade will use its Stealth to hide from them and attack anyone who is vulnerable. Perception checks opposed by the Mukade's Stealth are needed to see it before it attacks or the Mukade will gain surprise.

### Alternative Outcome

Please note that even though this creature is smaller than an average Mukade, this combat could potentially be fatal. One bite can easily destroy a limb; or a character. If you do not think that your party has enough muscle to fight such a beast then you can have them find it hibernating in a cave, allowing them to dispatch it with ease.

If you choose this option, you can still make the encounter tense for the players. As they enter the dark

cave they will suddenly be confronted by the creature, only after their hearts skip a beat will they realise that it is in hibernation. They must also be very quiet or risk waking it up.

### Contacting the Kami

Once the Mukade has been destroyed, the party can safely contact the kami. Read out the following:

*The priest asks you all to kneel in a semi-circle facing the stone. He follows suit and places the Blade of Heaven in front of him. He begins to pray to the kami, asking for her help and guidance to find the Blade of Water. After about 10 minutes, you feel the air around you grow moist as a thin mist envelops the area surrounding the stone.*

*The mist is cool and refreshing after the walk here in the baking sun. You see the mist spread out across the surface of the lake and as the sun shines through a rainbow is formed.*

*The priest thanks the kami and stands up. You have been shown the way.*

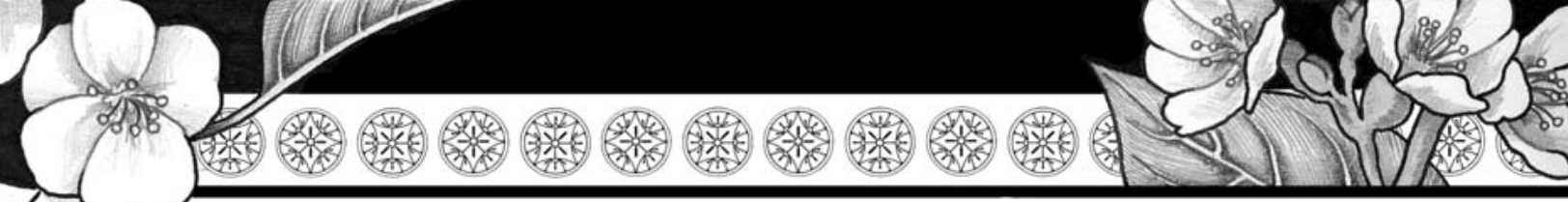
The kami has been the custodian of this blade for the last 200 years, ever since the warrior cast it into the lake. She has been waiting for a custodian of the other blades so she can relinquish herself of the responsibility.

The point where the rainbow touches the lake is where the warrior placed his sword in the water. The rainbow will remain for several hours, giving the party enough time to borrow a boat from Mutachi and row out to the spot indicated by the kami. If the players had any foresight they may even have travelled here by boat.

Once the boat is at the correct spot, someone must swim down and find the sword. The water is quite clear but gets darker further down. Fortunately, the lake is not too deep so most characters can hold their breath long enough to swim down and take a look. With the terrain and darkness on the lake bottom, anyone looking for the blade gets a -10% penalty to their Perception check. Each player may make up to two attempts.







### Mukade

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 22	Combat Actions: 2	Head (19-20)	4/8
CON 38	Damage Bonus: +1D12	Segment 1 (18)	4/5
DEX 12	Strike Rank: +6	Segment 2 (17)	4/5
SIZ 38	Movement: 6m	Segment 3 (16)	4/5
INT 1	—	Segment 4 (15)	4/5
POW 11	—	Segment 5 (14)	4/5
CHA 1	—	Segment 6 (13)	4/5
<i>Traits:</i> Poison (bite, see below)		Segment 7 (12)	4/5
<i>Skills:</i> Athletics 58%, Perception 55%, Stealth 72%		Segment 8 (11)	4/5
<i>Combat:</i> Bite 57%1D6+1D12+poison		Segment 9 (10)	4/5
<b>Centipede Venom</b>		Segment 10 (9)	4/5
Delay: 1D3 Combat Rounds		Segment 11 (8)	4/5
Potency: 80		Segment 12 (7)	4/5
Full Effect: 1 Hit Point damage to location struck, applies -8 penalty to victim's CON.		Segment 13 (6)	4/5
Duration: 3D10 minutes		Segment 14 (5)	4/5
See <i>Land of the Samurai</i> page 100 for more details on the mukade.		Segment 15 (4)	4/5
		Segment 16 (3)	4/5
		Segment 17 (2)	4/5
		Segment 18 (1)	4/5

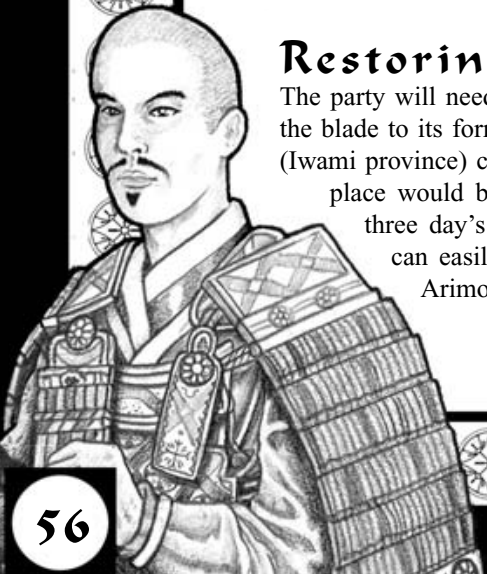



Anyone who succeeds at their Perception check will see the end of a handle sticking out of the lake bed. They must dig up some of the silt to free the sword. Although the sediment has preserved the sword reasonably well, it is encrusted with mud and silt. Before it can be used it will need to be cleaned and sharpened.



### Restoring the Blade

The party will need to find a sword smith to restore the blade to its former glory. With a successful Lore (Iwami province) check they will know that the best place would be the village of Benzo, which is three day's ride from here. If they fail they can easily find out by asking Hirozaki or Arimoro back in Unnan. Unnan is three





day's ride from here and Benzo is a further day's ride from Unnan.

As the party ride near Iwami province, they will see an increase in the activity of the Minamoto and Taira forces. Patrols have increased and watch posts have been set up. Other forces are camped in strategic locations ready to mobilise at a moments notice.

At several key points, they will be asked to show their orders to superiors who are ensuring that troops are where they should be and that no unauthorised forces have gained access to strategic locations. The party will have written orders from Hirozaki that allow them complete freedom due to their mission being of high importance. The mission is also secret and once anyone sees their orders, no further questions will be asked.

When the party near their destination they will catch up with a large bakemono force heading in the same direction. The players are on horseback so they can take a wide berth around the bakemono and get ahead of them without being noticed.

## Benzo

Benzo is a small village famed for its master weapon smiths, most of whom are of the Anno family allied to the Taira. More of a mountain retreat than an actual village; Benzo is located on a plateau in the Iwami mountain range. A small mountain path leads up to the settlement that consists of roughly 20 houses of modest construction, many of which have their own workshops and forges.

As the bakemono war has progressed, their services have been in demand making new weapons for the Taira and the Minamoto. Due to the importance of this village a garrison has been stationed here and some defences have been erected should the bakemono attempt to attack. Due to its location, Benzo is easy to defend against any assault. The only way in is via the mountain trail, which has been fortified to block the path.

*After several hours of climbing the windy mountain trail you come across a number bakemono corpses.*

*Further up you see a broken fortification spanning the path. Beyond the barricade, several villagers are clearing the bodies away. They see you approach and run to the village.*

*As you near the settlement the temperature drops and a thin layer of snow covers the ground, stained with patches of blood. You enter the village and see the inhabitants tending wounded soldiers. Forges are burning and the weapon smiths have resumed their work, the clanging of hammers on steel ringing through the air.*

*You are met by several ashigaru. They are wounded and weary but they greet you with courtesy and respect.*

The ashigaru will then explain that they successfully repelled a bakemono attack but they suffered great losses. Only nine of the ashigaru are fit enough to do their duty, the rest are either seriously wounded or dead, including all of the samurai. It has taken most of the day to clear the bodies away and they have just been planning to send for some reinforcements for the garrison but with so few of them left they do not wish to leave the village with even less soldiers.

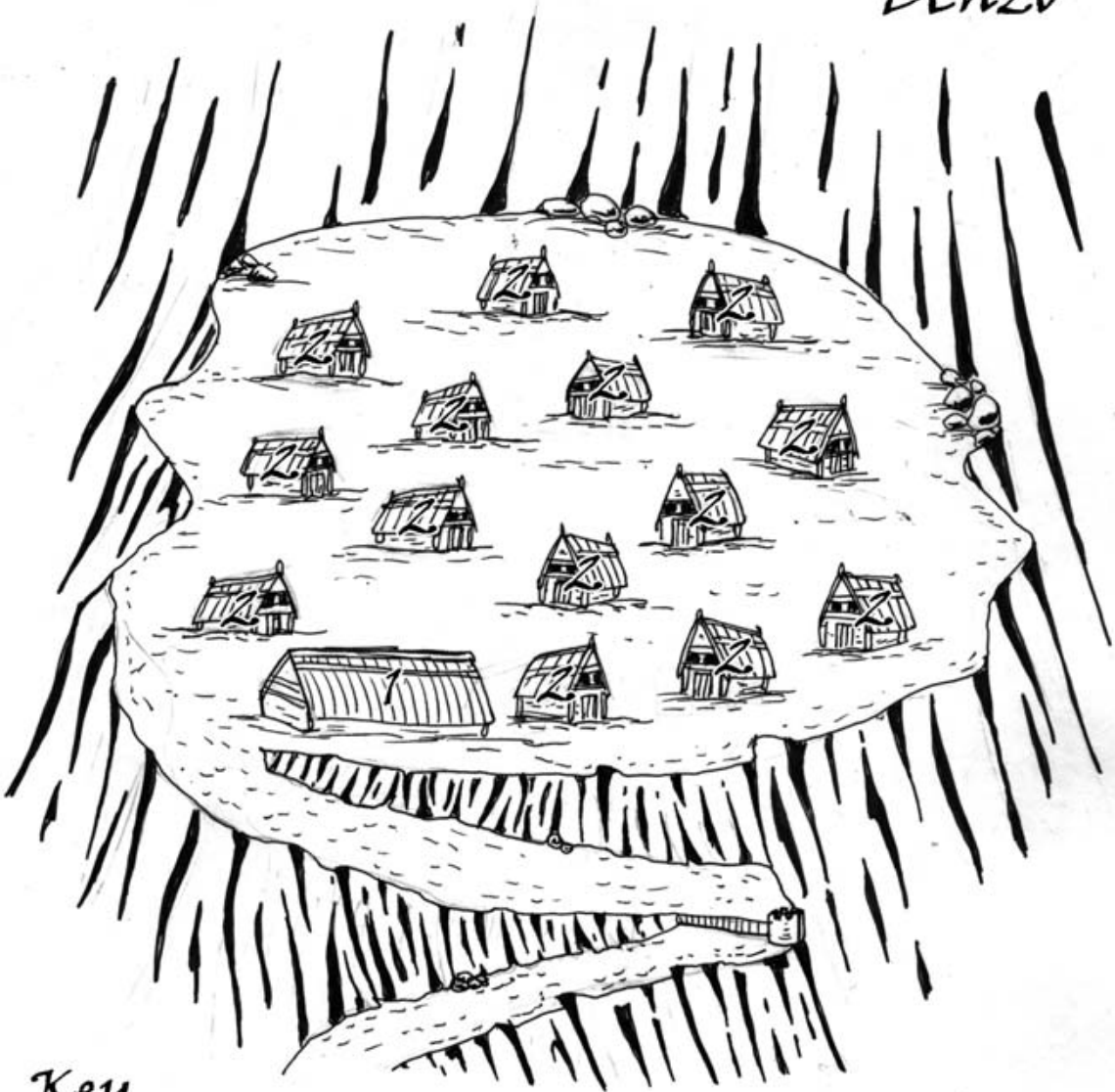
The players will hopefully conclude that the bakemono force they encountered on the way here might be coming to finish the job and destroy the village. If they do not realise this, a short while later, one of the soldiers on lookout will spot the approaching army.

## Preparing the Defences

With the defending samurai all dead, the party leader will be the highest ranking military person here so they must take charge. They need to organise the troops and prepare the defences to fight off the bakemono who will arrive in a few hours.

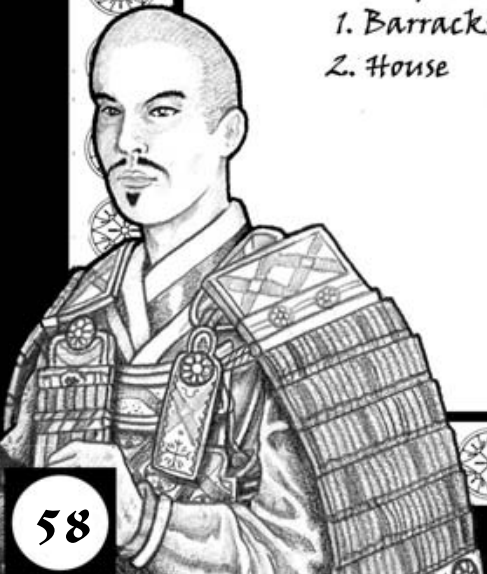
There are nine ashigaru remaining who can fight so the players need to get more men if possible, every additional fighter could mean the difference between victory and defeat. If approached, some of the villagers can be persuaded to join the fight, which will help to boost the numbers, whilst the rest will tend to the wounded and help in any way they can.

# Benzo



## Key

- 1. Barracks
- 2. House



## Villagers/Weaponsmiths

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 12	Combat Actions: 2	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 11	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 11	Magic Points: 11	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 13	Strike Rank: +11	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 12	On: 38	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 11	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 11	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 33%, Courtesy 28%, Dodge 28%, Engineering 32%, Influence 36%, Perception 43%, Persistence 36%, Resilience 32%

*Advanced Skills:* Craft (weaponsmith) 52%

*Combat:* Katana 43% 1D10+1

Dai kyu 31% 2D8+1

*Armour:* None

Sending for reinforcements will be extremely risky. By the time anyone journeys down the mountain path they would be met by the approaching army (it takes several hours to walk the trail and horses must be led down).

The one thing Benzo has to its advantage is that it is easy to defend and very difficult to attack. The mountain path is steep and narrow, which limits any invading force. The fortifications span the path further down and the trail above gives a great view to the killing ground below.

The fortifications were burnt in the last attack so they will need to be repaired. This can easily be done in the time available with the help of the villagers. The players may also want to build a barricade further up the path, so that if the main fortifications fall they can fall back to the secondary position.

As the party make their preparations for the impending attack, lookouts will inform them that the bakemono have started their ascent up the mountain trail and it will not be long before the attack begins.

## Defending Benzo

Due to the funnelling effect of the path, the bakemono attackers will fall in droves. They can only attack three abreast but they come in great numbers. If a defender should be injured, they should be replaced so the freshest fighters are always on the front lines.

The battle will last for several hours, which are broken down into half hour encounters. Every half hour of game time, roll 1D6 on the following table. Each roll after the first gets a cumulative +1 bonus (so some events will not take place until later in the battle).

Result	Event
1-5	Holding the Line
6	Mountain Breach
7	Man Down
8	Burning the Walls
9	Over the Walls
10	Retreat



### The Blade of Water

This exquisite katana has been expertly crafted giving it a +5% Kenjutsu bonus. The grip is wrapped with blue silk sageo and engraved along the blade are the words 'The resourceful shall adapt'.

The blade has the following enchantments:

- ⌘ **Versatility:** By expending 1 Magic Point, the wielder may attempt any skill test (except magic skills) with a 30% chance for 5 rounds.
- ⌘ **Weaponblessing:** Gives the blade a further +5% Kenjutsu and +1 damage bonus.
- ⌘ **Magical Resistance:** As one of the elemental blades it grants the wielder +5% to all magic resistance rolls (Dodge, Persistence and Resilience) and an additional +5% resistance for every other elemental blade within 50 feet that is being wielded by an ally.
- ⌘ **Conditions:** The magical effects of this blade are only available to humans with at least five advanced, non-magical, skills.



### Holding the Line

The defenders are holding their ground and keeping the bakemono at bay. The attackers may be climbing the wall but they are not getting over. As the bakemono climb to the top they must be driven back. A serious wound to an arm or leg will be enough to take them out of the fight and cause them to plummet into the masses below.

This encounter will last for several rounds of combat. If any of the defenders fall, proceed to the Man Down encounter.

### Mountain Breach

Some of the bakemono will attempt to climb up the mountain to get in behind the fortifications. They can be shot down so long as there are defenders on the path above but the defenders will only have a few rounds to shoot them before the bakemono make it to the top.

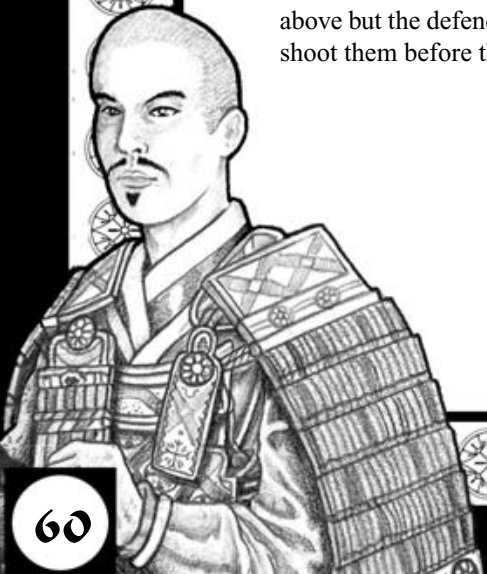
### Man Down

One of the defenders will fall, either dead or seriously injured. The bakemono will attempt to swarm through the breach. The defenders have one round to kill the attacker or he will break through followed by his companions. If this happens then proceed to the Over the Walls encounter.

### Burning the Walls

The bakemono attempt to burn the fortifications. The defenders have only a few minutes to douse the flames before the fire burns out of control. Hopefully they have water near by, if they do not then they must rush back to the village to get some but it is unlikely that they will return in time.

For each bucket of water thrown on the fire, there is a 50% chance that the flames are put out. This roll has a 10% penalty for every 30 seconds that the fire burns.





## Over the Walls

The attackers spill over the fortifications. The defenders have two rounds to fight back 1D4 bakemono or the defenders must fall back to their secondary blockade (if they have one).

## Retreat

When enough bakemono have fallen and enough defenders remain, the attackers will retreat and the day will be won. It will take several hours to clear up after the battle. Injuries need to be tended and the dead must be cleared away.

The villagers will be extremely grateful and are gracious hosts. They will attend to the needs of the players to the best of their ability.

## The Weapon Smith

Once things settle down, one of the weapon smiths will be happy to restore the Blade of Water for the party. Akio does not have the build of most weapon smiths but his skill is legendary amongst his peers. When he examines the blade he will be impressed by its quality even before he has started work on it.

Akio will spend the rest of the day and most of the next day restoring the sword. He carefully cleans the weapon and then sharpens the blade. The handle has rotted slightly and that is replaced, wound once more with blue silk sageo. At every step Akio takes the greatest care and treats the blade with the respect it deserves. On the eve of the second day, he will present it to the party and it will look as new as the day it was forged.

## Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are as follows:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Liberating Mutachi	1 Hero Point 1 On
Finding the Blade of Water	1 Hero Point
Defeating the attackers	1 improvement roll 1 On
Other roleplaying bonus/ penalty	GM determined



# BLADES OF EARTH & FIRE

'If you discern the principles of swordsmanship with certainty, when you defeat a single opponent freely, you will have defeated everyone in the world.'

*The Book of Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi*

The party may think that these two blades would be a good starting point, since they would get two swords in one go. However, it is important to remember that the warrior brothers both died before they could hide them so finding them could be extremely dangerous.

Mount Fuji is associated with many myths in Japanese lore and the players will need to investigate these legends if they are to find the Blades of Earth and Fire. Natsui has done some additional research to help the players in their quest. When the players ask him for some help he will reply as follows:

*'I have not been able to find much information about these two Elemental Blades, except that the mountain of fire referred to in the story is Mount Fuji. There are many local myths and legends associated with the volcano, so your best course of action would be to speak to people in the villages nearby and find out if the blades or the brothers are mentioned in any of them.'*

*I am sorry I cannot be more helpful with this.'*

## Myth Hunting

The party must travel to the villages and towns near Mount Fuji and listen to their stories of myth and legend. The best route to Mount Fuji is via Miyako, which is a one day ride from Nara. From the capital it is a further four day's ride over rough terrain.

Allowing for travel times and talking to the villagers, the party can visit one settlement per day. Food and lodgings will be provided by the villagers and they will be given rooms for the night.

Some villages will have similar tales to tell and others will have seemingly unrelated stories.

The players must put the pieces together to find out the truth of what happened and uncover the fate of the blades. As the party travels to each village, read out the appropriate story below.

## Narusawa, Legend of the Chosen Men

The village of Narusawa lies north of Mount Fuji. The villagers are wary of outsiders but will act with courtesy and respect to anyone of a higher caste. Once the players explain their presence here, there are many villagers who will be able to tell them the legend of The Chosen Men:

*'There is a story passed down in our village of the two brothers, Kenjin and Kenshu. They passed through here a few hundred years ago. They were the chosen of the Emperor himself to hunt down and kill sorcerers.'*

*'Our village had been plagued by demons for many months and fearing the work of a sorcerer, the brothers set about to rid us of this evil. They waited into the night until the demons attacked once more and chased them back to the mountains.'*

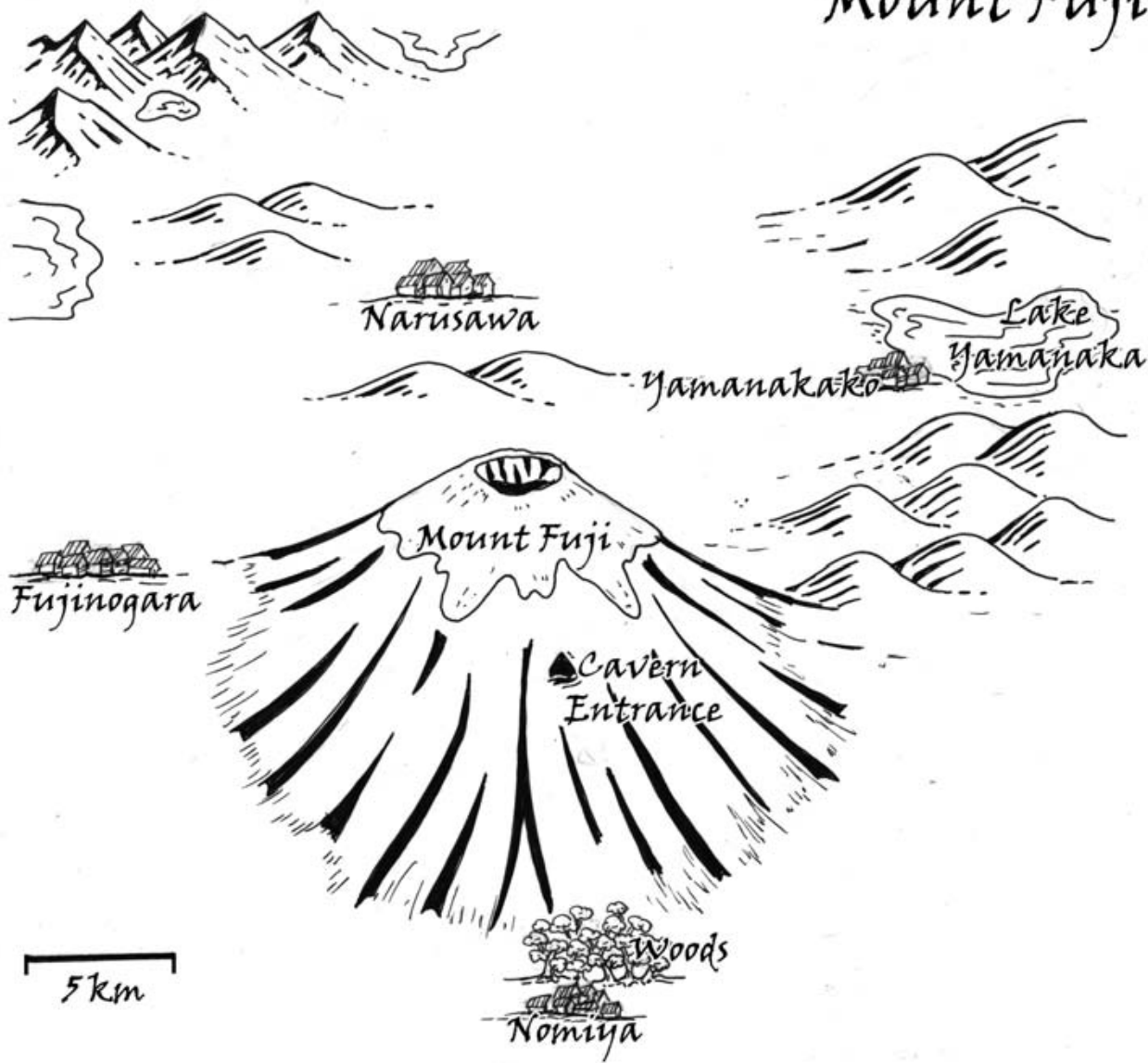
*'Kenjin and Kenshu never returned from Mount Fuji and the demons continued to kill the people of this village. There have not been any sightings for 100 years but every so often one of our number disappears without a trace. The people of Narusawa never venture near to the mountain for fear of what lurks within.'*

## Yamanakako, Tale of the Dark Summoner

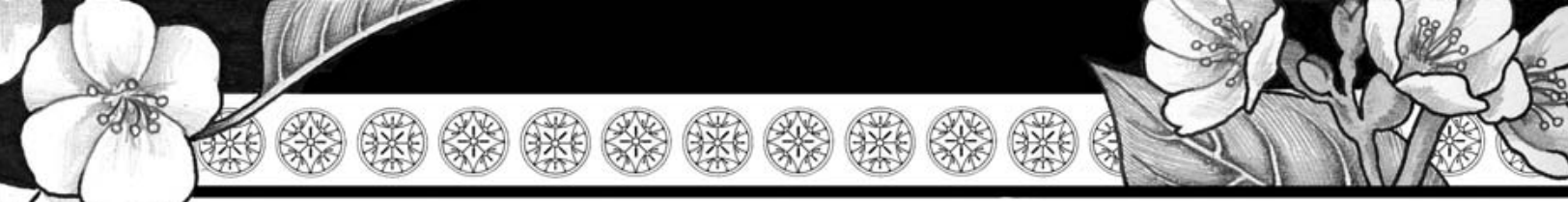
Yamanakako is a small fishing village next to Lake Yamanaka on the eastern side of Mount Fuji. Like the other villages surrounding the volcano, the people here go about their daily lives but live in fear of whatever evil lurks within the mountain. If asked, they will direct the players to Yokizashu, the local lore master who will tell them the folklore of the village:



# Mount Fuji







*'For centuries there have been rumours of a sorcerer living in Mount Fuji. He is known as The Summoner. He sends forth his demons at night to terrorise our village and take our children. Many of our people have been killed or gone missing over the years. Although the attacks are less frequent now, we still live in fear of what dwells in the mountain.'*

*They say there is a cave entrance half way up the mountain but those brave souls who have gone in search of it have never returned. '*

### **Nomiya, Story of the Haunted Woods**

Nomiya is situated south of Mount Fuji. The village is not far from the volcano but the woods to the north obscure much of the mountain's view. The villagers are not used to visitors; few people come here in trade for fear of the haunted woods. When approached, the inhabitants will tell their story:

*'We have heard tales of sorcerers and demons but none have come to our village for we have troubles of our own. The woods to the north, once a place of beauty and abundant with life, are now a place of dread and darkness.'*

*In the dead of night, you can hear cries of pain coming from within. Some say it is where the demons meet when they emerge from the mountain but most here believe that it is restless spirits or hungry ghosts.'*

### **Fujinogara, Myth of the Warriors of Earth and Fire**

The town of Fujinogara lies some distance to the west of the mountain. The people here are more welcoming than the other settlements located near Mount Fuji. The daimyo, Ogunami, will invite the party into his estate. Whilst sharing tea, he will explain the local myth of the town:

*'Two warriors, the bearers the fabled Blade of Earth and Blade of Fire, came here 200 years ago. It is rumoured that the Emperor ordered the magical blades to be scattered and the warrior of fire was to bury his sword within the heart of Mount Fuji.'*

*The legend says that they trekked to the south east side of the mountain to find a secret cave but the two men never returned. Many have since gone in search of the cave and the swords but their fate remains as much a mystery as the Warriors of Earth and Fire.'*

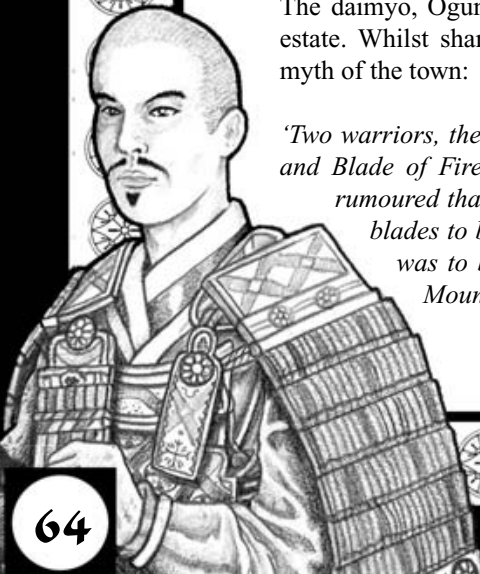
### **Other Tales**


There are other villages surrounding Mount Fuji but they have adopted the same myths and legends as the settlements described above, however they are not as detailed or reliable.

## **The Truth Behind the Myths**

Kenjin and Kenshu, the two warrior brothers and custodians of the Elemental Blades, journeyed to Mount Fuji to bury the Blade of Fire. They then planned to journey south to the island of Kyushu to hide the Blade of Earth.

When the brothers visited the villages near Mount Fuji, they heard tales of demons and sorcerers and vowed to





kill them before they buried the blades. They waited for the demons to attack and followed them back to the secret cave on the south east side of the mountain.

The warriors entered the lair but were overwhelmed by demons the sorcerer had summoned. They fought a retreating battle but both were fatally wounded. They made it back to the woods to gather their strength but the wounds were too deep and they both died.

Having failed in their tasks to both kill the sorcerer and hide the Elemental Blades, the spirits of the brothers could not rest. Their ghosts now haunt the woods south of the sorcerer's lair where they fell. They are bound to this place until their deaths can be avenged and the sorcerer's line is ended.

After they died, the sorcerer retrieved the two blades as trophies and torments the spirits. Every time they are reminded of their failure, their wails of anguish cut through the night.

Although the legends indicate that the sorcerer is somehow immortal, this is not the case. As he grew old, he found an apprentice to train and pass his legacy to. This mentor-student relationship has continued for generations as the line of sorcerers work for the dark god, Mikaboshi.

It is important to note here that The Summoner is a very different type of sorcerer to Sushigawa. Whereas Sushigawa inflicts pain directly upon his victims, The Summoner imposes his terror through his demons and other servants. When the party fight The Summoner and his minions, the protective powers of the Elemental Blades will not be as effective as when they finally face Sushigawa.

### **Servants of The Summoner**

The sorcerers became known as The Summoner, due to the fact that they summon demons to terrorise the settlements nearby. Although the current sorcerer summons demons whenever he has the need, he also has one bound into service to guard his lair.

In addition to the demon, The Summoner also has two Rokuro-kubi that serve him. He has granted hunting

rights so one of them hunts to the west and the other to the east. Villages south of Mount Fuji are left alone to avoid drawing attention to the area close to The Summoner's lair. After the Rokuro-kubi kill their victims, they bring them back to the cave where they feast upon them, leaving nothing but bones.

Any demons that are summoned will only leave the cave at night time. Likewise, the two Rokuro-kubi only venture out at night, although they can go outside during the day when disguised in human form.

### **Putting the Pieces Together**

From listening to the stories, the players should be able to discern the following facts:

- ♣ The two brothers are called Kenjin and Kenshu.
- ♣ They travelled to Mount Fuji to slay a sorcerer and bury the Blade of Fire.
- ♣ The sorcerer summons demons to terrorise and abduct people from the settlements nearby.
- ♣ The sorcerer, now known as The Summoner, has apparently inhabited a cave within the mountain for the last 200 years.
- ♣ The demons only come out at night.
- ♣ The demons kill or take people away from the village, never to be seen again.
- ♣ The two brothers were presumably killed by The Summoner and his demons.
- ♣ There is something haunting the woods between Mount Fuji and the village of Nomiya, possibly the two brothers or it could be demons.
- ♣ Although Nomiya is next to the haunted woods, they do not get attacked by the demons. The same is true of other villages close to Nomiya.
- ♣ The entrance to The Summoner's cave is on the south east side of the volcano.
- ♣ The cave entrance is located halfway up the mountain.

The players should now have enough information to search for the entrance to The Summoner's lair. However, one fact that they will not know is that when the stories mention 'demons', they are often referring to Rokuro-kubi. Since few people who see the attackers live to tell the tale, the mysterious abductors are simply known as Oni (demons).



## Finding The Cave

Over the years, the tactics of The Summoner have become more subtle and discreet. He only sends his demons to terrorise the villages sparingly, to avoid drawing too much attention to himself. He also avoids attacking the villages nearest to his lair to divert attention away from his location.

## Waiting for Demons

If the players decide to emulate their predecessors and wait through the night for the demons to show, there will only be a 5% chance that they are in the right place at the right time. For each night that they wait at the same location, their chance of success increases by 1%. If the players do not encounter the enemy, then they must search for the cave entrance.

However, if their plan is successful, a demon or Rokuro-kubi will come during the night and the party must fight it. There is a 30% chance that it will be a demon, otherwise it will be the headless form of a Rokuro-kubi.

If the players fight one of the creatures and it knows it cannot win, it will flee back to the cave. The players can then follow it through the woods and up the mountainside.

## The Woods

In order to climb the mountain where the entrance is located, the party must journey through the haunted woods. The restless spirits of the two brothers wander the woods. They are in a state of perpetual despair from their failure two centuries ago.

The foreboding atmosphere of the woods is heightened by the lack of sunlight that breaks through the canopy. It is in the darkest areas where the ghosts lurk, hoping for a way to end their eternal suffering. Whenever The Summoner tortures more victims in his lair, the spirits' wails echo through the woods as they are reminded of their failure.

The Summoner will often have one demon wandering the woods at night to keep the curious at bay. The rumours of his existence are enough to stop all but the bravest of

men from looking for his lair but he must keep the rumours alive by making the woods too dangerous to explore. If the ghosts see a demon, they will howl to scare away any potential explorers and hopefully save innocent people from being devoured by the demon.

If the party hear the ghosts they can track them down. If not, there is a 30% chance that they will encounter them anyway as they make their way through the trees. There is also a 40% chance that the party will encounter a demon if one is present, which they can fight and follow back to the cave.

The ghosts appear as ethereal samurai dressed in their armour but there are no swords at their sides. The malevolent spirits look sad. Their inability to communicate with the living frustrates them further, resulting in more wailing and moaning noises.

## Climbing the Mountain

There are two routes to the cave entrance. The easy way is the path used by The Summoner and his servants. This path is very difficult to spot (-40% Perception) as it is hidden amongst the natural rock formations.

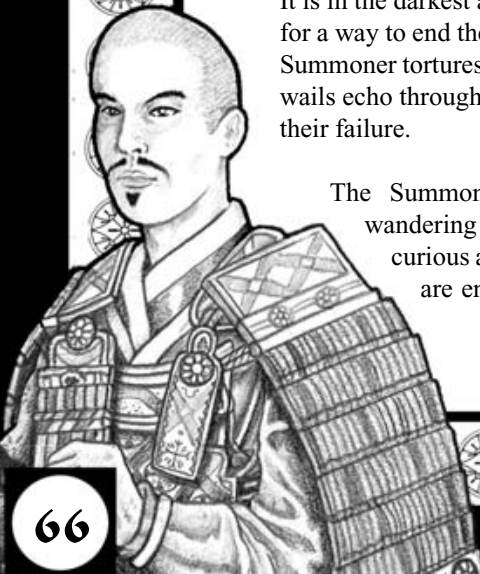
The hard route involves climbing up the mountain. The entrance can only be seen when in close proximity, as it too is hidden by the natural features of the mountain.

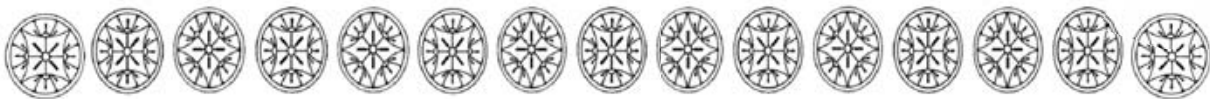
To find the entrance requires a bit of trial and error. Each separate climb requires an Athletics check (-15%) with a 25% chance of finding the entrance once they have climbed half way up the mountain side. If they do not find the entrance they can climb around the mountain to search for it. Each additional attempt requires another Athletics check but there is a cumulative +20% bonus to finding the entrance.

The safest way is to send up the most skilled climbers with a rope. Once they have found the entrance they can lower the rope for the rest of the party to climb up.

## Cave Entrance

Like the hidden path, the cave entrance is difficult to see unless the party have climbed up to the correct spot. The entrance looks like a fissure in the rock face. It is pitch black inside and no details can be determined





## Oni (Demon)

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 15	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	6/7
CON 15	Damage Bonus: +1D4	L. Arm (16-18)	6/7
DEX 13	Strike Rank: +13	R. Arm (13-15)	6/7
SIZ 17	Movement: 4m	Chest (10-12)	6/7
INT 13	—	Abdomen (07-09)	6/7
POW 17	—	L. Leg (04-06)	6/7
CHA 7	—	R. Leg (01-03)	6/7

*Traits:* Chaotic Aura, Chaotic Features (1D3), Dark Sight, Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Regeneration 1Hit Point/Combat Round, Vulnerable to Ivory  
*Skills:* Athletics 55%, Dodge 45%, Evaluate 55%, Influence 65%, Lore (Spirit World) 75%, Perception 65%, Persistence 75%, Resilience 65%, Stealth 40%, Tracking 65%  
*Combat:* Bite 70% 1D6+2+1D4  
 Claw 80% 1D4+2+1D4  
 Naginata 65% 1D10+1D4 (AP 4)  
 Tetsubo 60% 2D8+1D4 (AP 4)  
*Armour:* Tough Hide (AP 6, no skill penalty)  
 Full details of the Oni can be found in *Land of the Samurai* page 101

from the outside. It is high enough to walk through but quite narrow, so only one person can enter at a time.

If the party make too much noise or wait too long outside, the Rokuro-kubi near the entrance will hear them and make a surprise attack from the darkness.

With their lanterns lit and swords at the ready, the players can enter The Summoner's lair. As they enter the cave, the ghosts will howl once more as the party enter the sorcerer's domain.

## The Summoner's Lair

As the party walk through the entrance, it soon widens out into a tunnel that curves round to the left. The tunnels are wide enough to stand two abreast but it is difficult to fight in such a cramped space. Anyone using

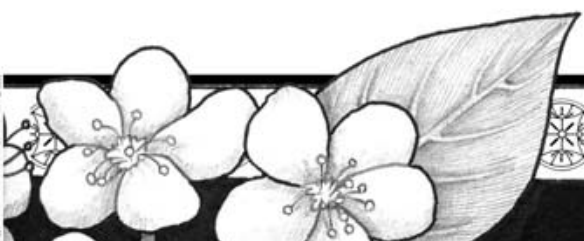
a weapon larger than a Wakazashi gets a -10% penalty to their weapon skill whilst in the tunnels, unless they have the full width of the tunnel to fight in.

Most of the tunnels and caverns are high enough but there are certain points where they will need to duck under low rocks and stalactites. Stalagmites also grow up from the floor forcing the party to walk single file in those areas.

Most of the cave network is a natural formation but parts of it do appear manmade as tunnels and caverns have been widened to accommodate its inhabitants.

### 1: Entry Cavern

The tunnel soon opens out into a small cavern with three tunnels leading off. The left tunnel is very wide





### Rokuro-kubi (human form)

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 13	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-6
CON 13	Damage Bonus: +1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-5
DEX 14	Magic Points: 12	R. Arm (13-15)	-5
SIZ 13	Strike Rank: +13	Chest (10-12)	-8
INT 11	Movement: 4m	Abdomen (07-09)	-7
POW 12	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-6
CHA 11	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-6

*Traits:* Extensible neck (1m per combat round), Regenerate  
*Skills:* Athletics 40%, Dodge 50%, Perception 55%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 65%  
*Combat:* Katana 50% 1D10+1+1D2  
 Bite 60% 1D6+1D2  
*Armour:* None  
 Full details of Rokuro-kubi can be found in *Land of the Samurai* page 102

### Rokuro-kubi (head form)

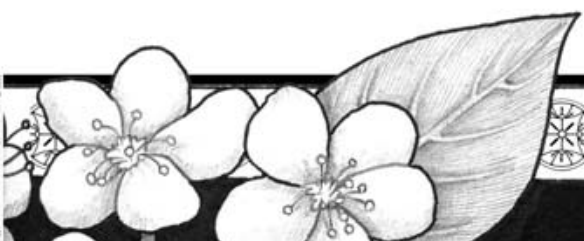
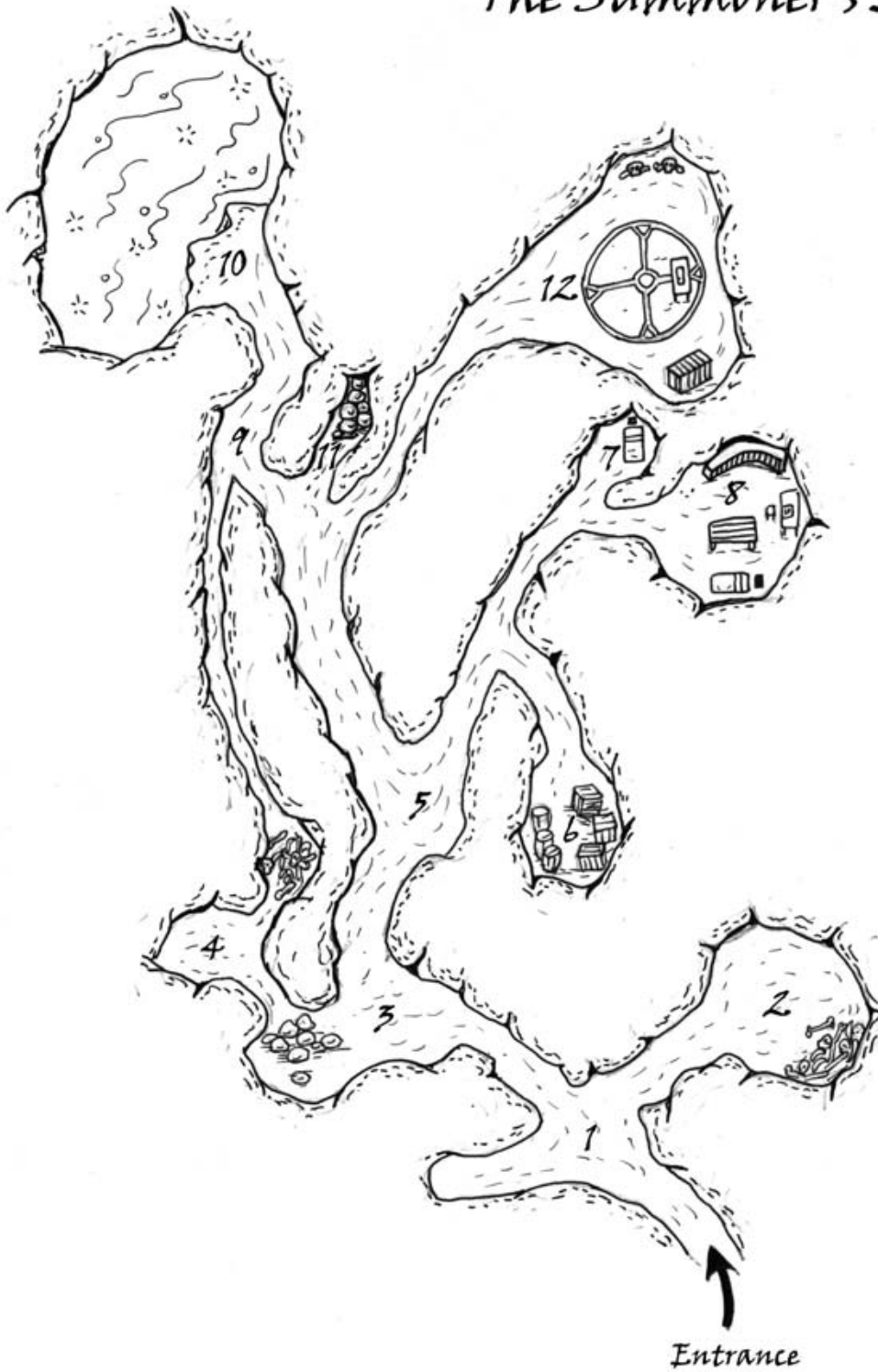
Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 11	Combat Actions: 3	Head (18-20)	-5
CON 11	Damage Bonus: 0	Entrails (1-17)	-5
DEX 14	Magic Points: 12	—	—
SIZ 11	Strike Rank: +13	—	—
INT 11	Movement: 6m (flying)	—	—
POW 12	—	—	—
CHA 11	—	—	—

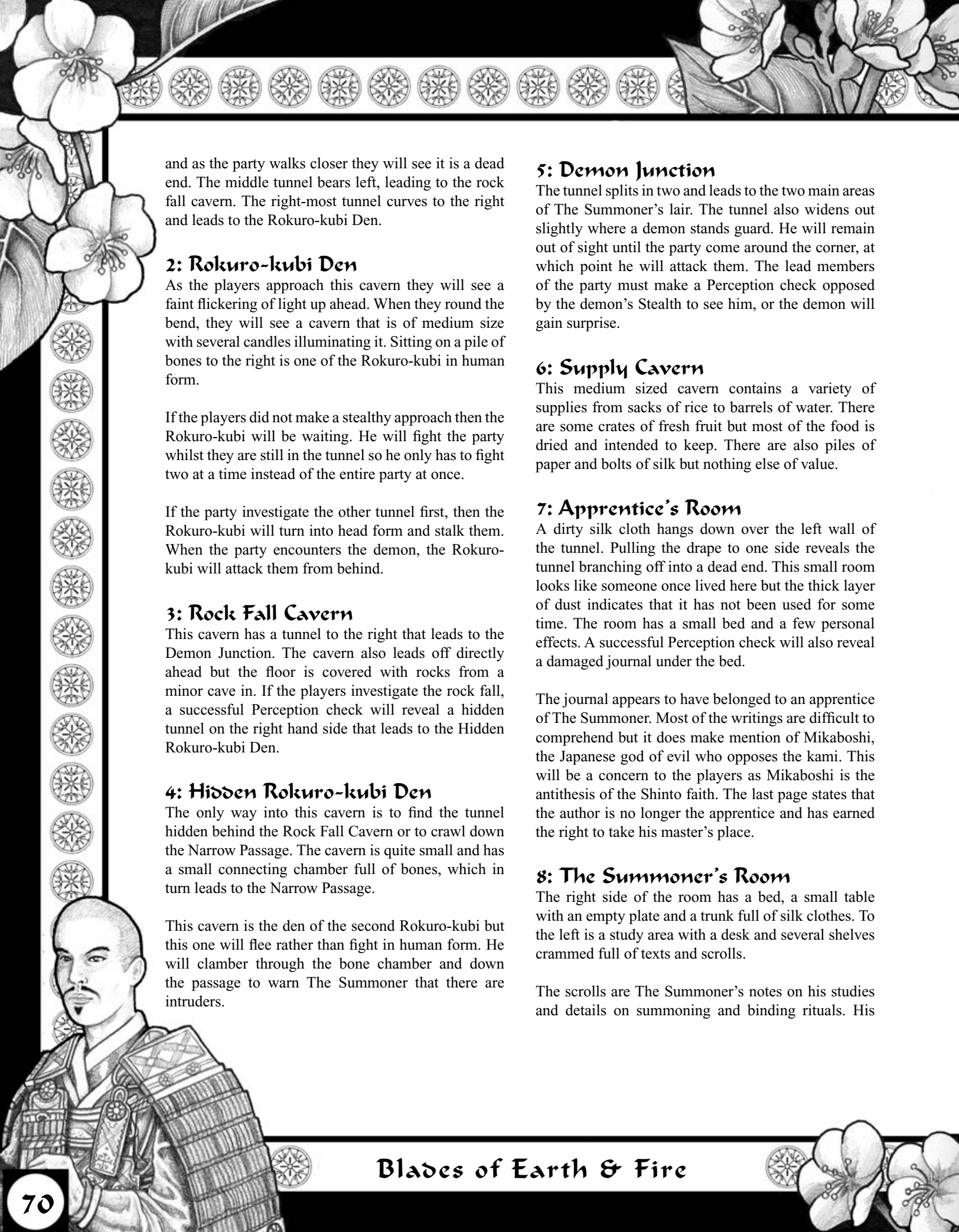
*Skills:* Athletics 20%, Dodge 80%, Perception 75%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 115%  
*Combat:* Bite 60% 1D6+1D2  
*Armour:* None  
*Spells:* Blind 35% (Magnitude 2) or Knockdown 35% (Magnitude 2), Haste 40% (Magnitude 3) or Hide 40% (Magnitude 3)  
 Full details of Rokuro-kubi can be found in *Land of the Samurai* page 102





## The Summoner's Lair





and as the party walks closer they will see it is a dead end. The middle tunnel bears left, leading to the rock fall cavern. The right-most tunnel curves to the right and leads to the Rokuro-kubi Den.

## 2: Rokuro-kubi Den

As the players approach this cavern they will see a faint flickering of light up ahead. When they round the bend, they will see a cavern that is of medium size with several candles illuminating it. Sitting on a pile of bones to the right is one of the Rokuro-kubi in human form.

If the players did not make a stealthy approach then the Rokuro-kubi will be waiting. He will fight the party whilst they are still in the tunnel so he only has to fight two at a time instead of the entire party at once.

If the party investigate the other tunnel first, then the Rokuro-kubi will turn into head form and stalk them. When the party encounters the demon, the Rokuro-kubi will attack them from behind.

## 3: Rock Fall Cavern

This cavern has a tunnel to the right that leads to the Demon Junction. The cavern also leads off directly ahead but the floor is covered with rocks from a minor cave in. If the players investigate the rock fall, a successful Perception check will reveal a hidden tunnel on the right hand side that leads to the Hidden Rokuro-kubi Den.

## 4: Hidden Rokuro-kubi Den

The only way into this cavern is to find the tunnel hidden behind the Rock Fall Cavern or to crawl down the Narrow Passage. The cavern is quite small and has a small connecting chamber full of bones, which in turn leads to the Narrow Passage.

This cavern is the den of the second Rokuro-kubi but this one will flee rather than fight in human form. He will clamber through the bone chamber and down the passage to warn The Summoner that there are intruders.

## 5: Demon Junction

The tunnel splits in two and leads to the two main areas of The Summoner's lair. The tunnel also widens out slightly where a demon stands guard. He will remain out of sight until the party come around the corner, at which point he will attack them. The lead members of the party must make a Perception check opposed by the demon's Stealth to see him, or the demon will gain surprise.

## 6: Supply Cavern

This medium sized cavern contains a variety of supplies from sacks of rice to barrels of water. There are some crates of fresh fruit but most of the food is dried and intended to keep. There are also piles of paper and bolts of silk but nothing else of value.

## 7: Apprentice's Room

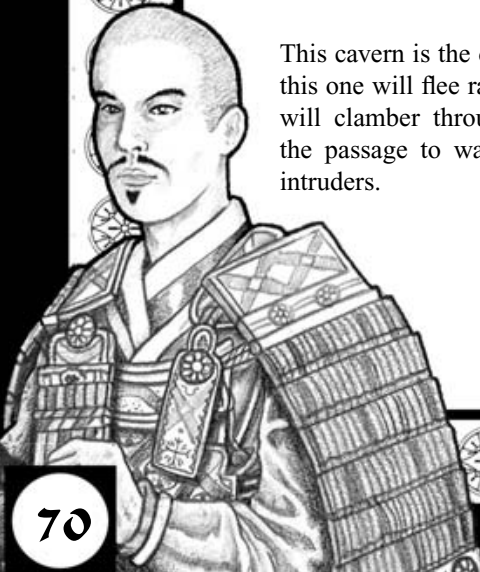
A dirty silk cloth hangs down over the left wall of the tunnel. Pulling the drape to one side reveals the tunnel branching off into a dead end. This small room looks like someone once lived here but the thick layer of dust indicates that it has not been used for some time. The room has a small bed and a few personal effects. A successful Perception check will also reveal a damaged journal under the bed.


The journal appears to have belonged to an apprentice of The Summoner. Most of the writings are difficult to comprehend but it does make mention of Mikaboshi, the Japanese god of evil who opposes the kami. This will be a concern to the players as Mikaboshi is the antithesis of the Shinto faith. The last page states that the author is no longer the apprentice and has earned the right to take his master's place.

## 8: The Summoner's Room

The right side of the room has a bed, a small table with an empty plate and a trunk full of silk clothes. To the left is a study area with a desk and several shelves crammed full of texts and scrolls.

The scrolls are The Summoner's notes on his studies and details on summoning and binding rituals. His





writings reveal he is in the service of Mikaboshi and summons demons to do his master's bidding. Other notes reveal that The Summoner has been experimenting to improve his summoning ritual but the details will have little meaning to the players.

### 9: Narrow Passage

As the party round a slight bend they can see a narrow passage on their left. It is only big enough for one person to crawl down at a time and seems to run parallel with the tunnel that they just walked up.

This passage leads to the Hidden Rokuro-kubi Den but it will be risky for the players to follow it to the end as it would be impossible to fight in such a confined space.

### 10: Lava Cavern

As the players make their way through the winding tunnel, the temperature rises significantly. At the end of the tunnel they are hit with a blast of heat as it opens out into a sprawling cavern, filled with a vast pool of molten lava. The players will instantly break out in a sweat from the intense heat. All skills get a -5% penalty from the high temperature whilst in this cavern.

If the party did not find and destroy the Rokuro-kubi in the hidden den then there is a chance he will use his head form to fly along the passage and ambush the players. The party will be backed up against the lava pool, which could be extremely nasty if the Rokuro-kubi has the Knockdown spell.

### 11: Cave In

As the party head down this tunnel, they will soon come to a cave-in that has completely blocked the passageway, forcing them to turn back.

### 12: The Summoning Room

When the players approach this room, they will hear chanting coming from inside. When they enter the room, the chanting will stop. Read out the following:

*The scent of death fills the air as you enter a large cavern. To your left, you see two skeletons fastened to the wall with a katana driven through each skull. To your right is an empty cage.*

*A large circle with magical symbols has been etched into the floor, filling most of the cavern. On the far side, The Summoner stands over an altar that drips with the blood of his latest victim. Fire erupts from the middle of the circle and you watch in horror as a demon rises from the flames.*

Whilst the demon attacks the party, The Summoner will attempt to dominate one of the players. The Summoner will command the dominated character to aid the demon. If any of the party attacks The Summoner, he will command the dominated player to come to his aid and fight the assailant.

When The Summoner is defeated, anyone who was dominated will be released but the demon will remain. When the demon is slain, it will erupt into flames causing 1D4 fire damage to a random location to everyone within a five metre radius (armour does not reduce this damage).

Once the fight is over, the players can investigate the room more thoroughly. The body on the altar was a young woman from one of the nearby villages. A stab wound to the heart confirms that she is dead.

The two skeletons on the left wall are the remains of the warrior brothers and the two swords are the Elemental Blades that the players seek. The players must remove the blades from the skulls, at which point the skeletons will collapse to the floor.





## The Summoner

The Summoner has a shaven head and a medium sized beard. His piercing eyes stare through a badly burnt and scarred face.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 10	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 11	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 13	Magic Points: 14	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 11	Strike Rank: +13	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 13	On: 35	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 14	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 11	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Courtesy 29%, Dodge 32%, Influence 31%, Lore (World) 29%, Perception 37%, Persistence 44%, Resilience 30%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 64%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 57%, Summoning 57%

*Spells:* Burrow 57%, Dominate (Human) 57%

*Combat:* Tanto 33% ID6

*Armour:* None



## Closure

### Freeing the Brothers

When the party return to the woods they will encounter the ghosts once more. The spirits are still bound to the woods unable to rest. In order to put their spirits to rest, the following conditions must be met:

- ☞ The Summoner must be killed.
- ☞ All of the demons and servants must be killed.
- ☞ The earthly remains of the brothers must be retrieved from inside the cave and then buried in the woods.

Once all of these tasks have been completed, the two spirits will be able to rest. If the players witness the event, they will see the ghostly brothers smile at the party before the ethereal forms fade into the spirit world forever.

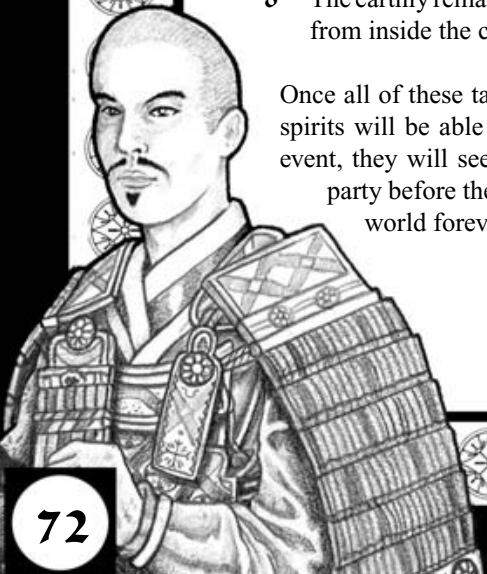
If the players bury the skeletons but the other conditions have not been met, the two spirits will hover around the party, trying to tell the players that the task remains unfinished.

### Spreading the News

The players will most likely want to inform the local villagers that The Summoner is dead and his demons have all been slain. The news will come as a great relief to the villagers, who will be grateful to the players for everything they have done.

However, if the party did not kill all of the demons and Rokuro-kubi, the creatures will return to the villages to seek their revenge.

If the players wish to rest and recuperate from their ordeal, the villagers will be happy for them to stay for as long as they required. The party will be fed and well





### The Blade of Earth

This exquisite katana has been expertly crafted giving it a +5% Kenjutsu bonus. The grip is wrapped with yellow silk sageo and engraved along the blade are the words ‘The loyal are protected’.

The blade has the following enchantments:

- ♣ **Protection:** By expending 1 Magic Point, the wielder gains +2AP to each location.
- ♣ **Weaponblessing:** Gives the blade a further +5% Kenjutsu and +1 damage bonus.
- ♣ **Magical Resistance:** As one of the Elemental Blades it grants the wielder +5% to all magic resistance rolls (Dodge, Persistence and Resilience) and an additional +5% resistance for every other Elemental Blade within 50 feet that is being wielded by an ally.
- ♣ **Conditions:** The magical effects of this blade are only available to a human who is willingly in the service of another (such as a samurai).



### The Blade of Fire

This exquisite katana has been expertly crafted giving it a +5% Kenjutsu bonus. The grip is wrapped with red silk sageo and engraved along the blade are the words ‘The righteous shall prevail’.

The blade has the following enchantments:

- ♣ **Bladesharp:** By expending 1 Magic Point, the wielder gets an additional +5% Kenjutsu bonus and the blade deals an extra point of damage.
- ♣ **Weaponblessing:** Gives the blade a further +5% Kenjutsu and +1 damage bonus.
- ♣ **Magical Resistance:** As one of the Elemental Blades it grants the wielder +5% to all magic resistance rolls (Dodge, Persistence and Resilience) and an additional +5% resistance for every other Elemental Blade within 50 feet that is being wielded by an ally.
- ♣ **Conditions:** The magical effects of this blade are only available to humans with 65 or more On.

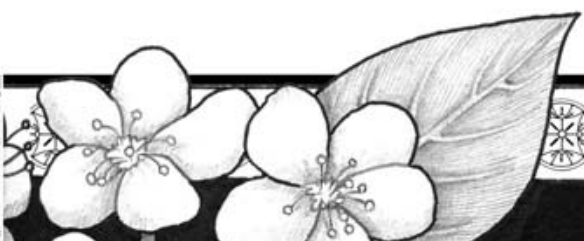


looked after until they are ready to leave. If any of The Summoner’s servants survived, you can have them attack the village whilst the players are still there.

### Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are as follows:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Killing The Summoner	1 On
Killing The Summoner’s servants	1 On
Finding the Blades	1 Hero Point
Releasing the brothers	1 improvement roll
Other roleplaying bonus/penalty	GM determined





# THE BLADE OF WIND

*"If your strength is only that which comes from vitality, your words and personal conduct will appear to be in accord with the Way and you will be praised by others."*

*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo*

If this is the last Elemental Blade that the players search for Natsui would have researched the information that they need whilst they were finding the other blades. If the party decides to look for this one sooner, they will have to wait for a number of days whilst Natsui gathers the information they need. When Natsui has the information, he will explain as follows:

*'As you can imagine, finding details about Hokkaido is difficult but I have found out some information that should help get you started. You will need to travel by ship to the port town of Muroan, which is on the southern coast of the island.*

*Once there, you will need to journey to the highest mountain, which is situated in central Hokkaido. This will take about a week on foot, so make sure you are prepared for such a hike. Due to recent events, the Ainu people will not be very hospitable to the Japanese, so you must travel with caution.*

*Once there, you will have to climb the mountain to discover the fate of the warrior who took his blade there. Hopefully you will find some clues that will lead you to its final resting place.'*

## Voyage to Hokkaido Preparation

The party have a long journey ahead of them so they will need to make sure that they are well prepared and fully equipped. In addition to food and water, there are a number of other items that they might find useful, such as rope and lanterns. They can get all of the supplies they need from Arimoro in Miyako, which is a days ride from Nara.

If the players investigate the climate in Hokkaido, they will discover that the

Ainu lands have cool summers and freezing winters. At this point in the story, winter is fast approaching so they will need to bring suitable clothes for a cold climate.

The party will be spending many weeks in Hokkaido and will need to deal with the Ainu at times. If the players take some of the Ainu currency acquired in the Fragile Loyalties chapter, this will prove extremely useful to them.

## Setting Sail

Once the players have everything they need, they can head to Yasamoto, which is a short ride from Miyako. Once there, they will discover that the *Sui Tatsu* is not currently docked here and they must await its return. It is due back in a week, so the players will have time to do some training if they have the need.

When the *Sui Tatsu* returns, Kanamuchi will re-supply the hold and set sail whenever the players are ready to leave. Kanamuchi knows of the port town and will inform the party that due to the tides and wind, the journey will take about two weeks.

If you want to make the journey more interesting, you can include a sea encounter from Appendix II.

## Survivor

After 10 days at sea, as the *Sui Tatsu* sails around the northern peninsula of Honshu, one of the crew spots some flotsam in the water ahead. As Kanamuchi steers the ship to investigate, please read out the following:

*The Sui Tatsu slowly makes its way through the flotsam scattered on the ocean surface. Kanamuchi will inform you that it is the wreckage from an Ainu ship but he is unsure of what could have destroyed it in such a manner. Some of the crew mutter curses of demons and sea serpents, whilst others pray to kami and the gods.*

*In the distance, you see a dinghy with several people in it but they do not appear to be moving. Kanamuchi steers the Sui Tatsu towards it and you can see three*



*Ainu slumped inside. They look dehydrated and sun burnt. One of them slowly opens his eyes to look at you but he does not have the strength to move.*

Hopefully the players will want to rescue the survivor if not Kanamuchi will insist upon it. Not only is he honour bound to help a sailor in need but the man could also explain what happened to his ship.

If the party climb down to investigate they will discover that the other two Ainu are dead. The survivor will need to be tied and lifted onboard the *Sui Tatsu* as he is too weak to move. He will need food and water and anyone with First Aid can treat his sun burn. The following day he will still be weak but able to talk.

The survivor is called Asherine and he will thank Kanamuchi and his crew for saving him. He will then try to explain what happened. The same communication problems exist as detailed in the *Fragile Loyalties* chapter.

Asherine will say the word ‘Akkorokamui’ several times but Kanamuchi or the crew will not know what he is referring to. If provided with paper, Asherine will draw a creature that resembles an octopus and gesture with his arms that it is very big!

Once Asherine knows the party is heading to Hokkaido, he will offer to stay with them as a guide to thank them for saving his life. He is well travelled and will be invaluable if they are to journey through the Ainu lands.

### **Akkorokamui**

The following day the *Sui Tatsu* will sail round the southern peninsulas of Hokkaido, known locally as Funka Bay. This is the region where the Akkorokamui is said to lurk. This is where Asherine’s ship was attacked and then drifted out to sea.

As the ship sails through the domain of the legendary sea creature, read out the following:

*One of the crew shouts a sighting to the port side. You can see Hokkaido in the distance but your attention is drawn to a large red creature heading towards the Sui Tatsu. As it approaches, you see it is giant octopus at least 50 metres in length.*

*Asherine looks terrified, repeatedly shouting ‘Akkorokamui, Akkorokamui.’, whilst Kanamuchi yells orders to the crew. The Sui Tatsu changes course to escape the beast but it is too slow. A giant tentacle rises out of the ocean and smashes down on to the deck, killing one of the crew.*

It is extremely unlikely that the party and crew will defeat this creature; all they can do is survive the encounter. The fight will be chaos, as tentacles smash into the ship and sweep crew members overboard. Occasionally, a tentacle will coil around a crewman and deposit him into the creature’s mouth.

The purpose of this encounter is not to kill the players but to shipwreck them without supplies. The survivors then get stranded on the island of Hokkaido, cut off and ill-equipped for the task ahead. Not only will their quest be more challenging but it sets up the encounter with Enezga at the end of the chapter.

As the fight progresses, the *Sui Tatsu* will slowly get destroyed. Timbers will splinter and crack, masts will topple and crewmen will be crushed, eaten and thrown overboard. The players will not be hit directly





## Asherine

Asherine is an excitable fellow. Life to him is an adventure and when faced with danger, he strives to overcome his fears and face it head on.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 12	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON 14	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX 14	Magic Points 10	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ 13	Strike Rank: +13	Chest (10-12)	2/8
INT 14	—	Abdomen (07-09)	2/7
POW 10	—	L. Leg (04-06)	1/6
CHA 13	—	R. Leg (01-03)	1/6

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 32%, Boating 27%, Dodge 32%, Perception 44%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 52%, Stealth 25%

*Advanced Skills:* Lore (Hokkaido) 42%

*Combat:* Scimitar 45% 1D6+1  
Shortbow 39% 1D8

*Armour:* Heavy leather hauberk and leather trows (Penalties factored into above skills)



and hard but they are also slow giving a +10% chance to dodge.

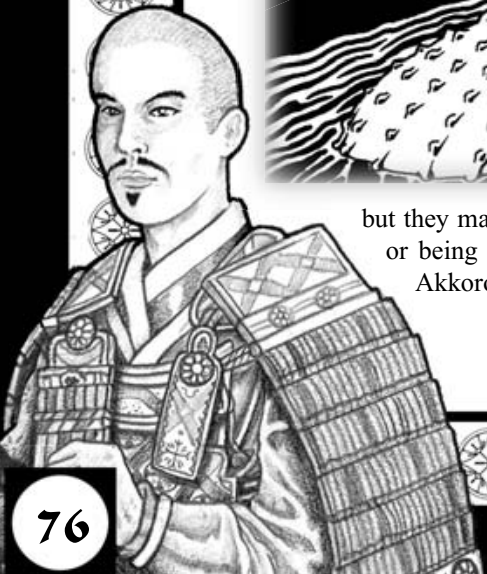
The fight will go on for some time until the *Sui Tatsu* begins to take on water and few of the crew remain. At this point, the party must abandon ship. Once the ship starts to sink and the Akkorokamui has eaten enough of the crew, the creature will swim off leaving behind a destroyed ship and many corpses.

## Shipwrecked

The only survivors will be the party, Asherine (who is still weak from his previous ordeal), Kanamuchi and a few of the crew. The survivors will be swimming amongst the wreckage as the bulk of the ship sinks into the ocean. One life craft will remain but it is not big enough for all of the survivors. They must find some flotsam to cling onto, such as a broken mast or deck timbers.

but they may take damage from falling masts or being knocked aside by a tentacle. The Akkorokamui's attacks may be numerous

The players can fasten several pieces of flotsam together to form a makeshift raft. If the players have





## Akkorokamui

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 42	Combat Actions: 4	Head (19-20)	4/26
CON 20	Damage Bonus: +2D10	Body (17-18)	4/24
DEX 23	Strike Rank: +14	Arm 1 (15-16)	4/24
SIZ 100	Movement: 10m swimming	Arm 2 (13-14)	4/24
INT 6	—	Arm 3 (11-12)	4/24
POW 11	—	Arm 4 (9-10)	4/24
CHA 4	—	Arm 5 (7-8)	4/24
<i>Skills:</i> Athletics 40%, Perception 50%, Resilience 50%, Stealth 40%		Arm 6 (5-6)	4/24
<i>Combat:</i> Arm 60% 1D6+2D10		Arm 7 (3-4)	4/24
<i>Armour:</i> Tough Skin (no skill penalty)		Arm 8 (1-2)	4/24

to swim to find more wreckage, they must shed their armour and heavy weapons (except for the Elemental Blades of course).

If the players think ahead, they will also want to find any supplies that did not go down with the ship. However, they must be quick as some of the heavy items will begin to sink as the containers fill with water. The following table lists the percentage chance of finding different types of salvage:

Salvage	% Chance
Clothing	15%
Food Crate	35%
Mast	40%
Medical Supplies	10%
Money Chest	15%
Personal Effects	5%
Rope	30%
Timbers	60%
Water Barrel	30%

Fortunately, the tides have changed and the party will slowly drift towards the mainland but it will take

several days. Any food and water they managed to salvage must be used sparingly.

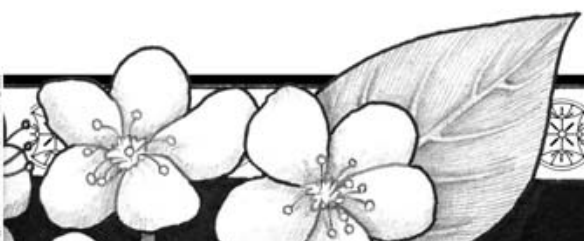
After they have been adrift for two to three days they will sight land. The party can use timbers to row their raft or simply swim to the small beach. Unknown to them at this point, they have landed on one of the southern peninsulas.

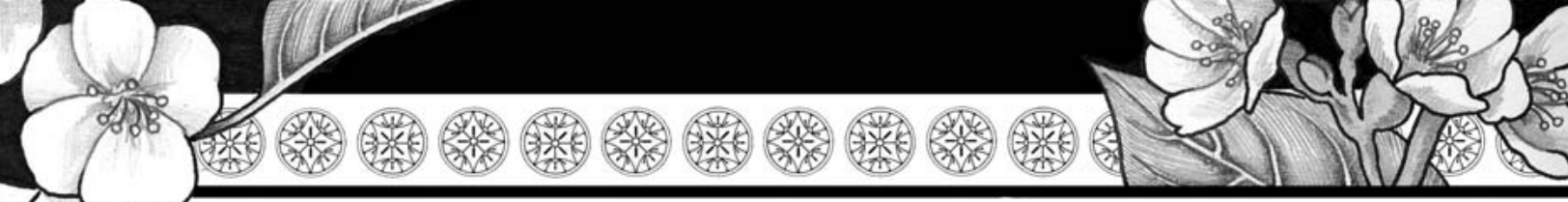
The players must now decide how to proceed. Asherine will guide the party as agreed and will suggest that they find the nearest settlement so they can determine where they are. Once Asherine has a point of reference, he can take them to the mountain.

The more time that the players spend with Asherine, the more of their language he will pick up, making it easier to communicate with him. He is a friendly and honourable man, traits that the players do not associate with his kind.

## Encounters in Hokkaido

Hokkaido is a land of mountains and dense forests. Although roads do exist between some settlements,





they are rarely flat or straight. There are few areas of plains in Hokkaido and most of their settlements are situated in these densely populated areas to the west.

With most of their supplies gone and their location unknown, the party have a long road ahead of them as they make their way to the mountain. The journey will be eventful, so pick encounters as required or roll on the table below.

1D8 Roll	Encounter
1-2	Ainu Settlement
3	Bear
4	Broken Bridge
5	Travellers
6	Wolf Pack
7-8	Mercenary Group

Please note that the Ainu Settlement encounter will occur at least twice (once for the first visit and once for the town of Muroran). The fighting encounters are best used after they have been to Muroran, so Kanamuchi and his crew are no longer with them.

### Ainu Settlement

The party arrive at a village or town. Ainu settlements consists of a number of huts made from grasses and bamboo. The people wear practical clothes made from animal skin and embroidered with simple contrasting patterns. Many of the women wear big looped earrings and beaded necklaces tied to metal discs or crescents.

As the party enter the settlement, they will be met with stares as most people are not used to seeing outsiders. Unfortunately, since it is widely known that many Ainu were killed by the Japanese, they will not be treated with hospitality or respect (something that players in higher castes will find difficult to get used to). Some Ainu will even be angry and make hostile gestures toward the players.

Luckily for the players, Asherine can help calm down most situations. Once the Ainu see that the party are trusted friends of one of their people, they will be more tolerant of the players. On hearing that the

party saved Asherine's life, some will thank them and a more friendly attitude will prevail.

If the players have any money, especially if it is Ainu currency, they can trade for any supplies they might need. The Ainu do not have much in the way of exotic items; it will mainly be food, clothing and basic equipment. The Ainu will be less inclined to sell weapons or armour but if pressed, Asherine can convince them although the price will be higher than normal.

One thing to note is that the Ainu do not have lots of food to spare so the players will only be able to purchase a limited supply. This means that whilst on their travels, the party will need to hunt and forage for their food.

### First Visit

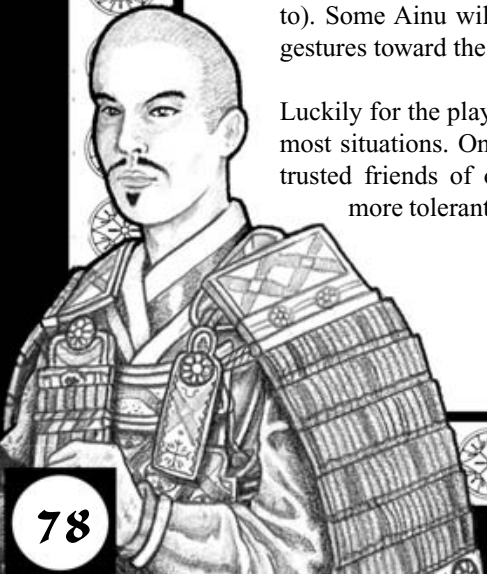
If this is the first settlement encountered, Asherine will be able to determine where they are and will inform the players that it will take them nearly two weeks to get to the mountain on foot. Some of the terrain will be too rough for horses and it is unlikely that the players will be able to get enough horses for the entire party anyway.

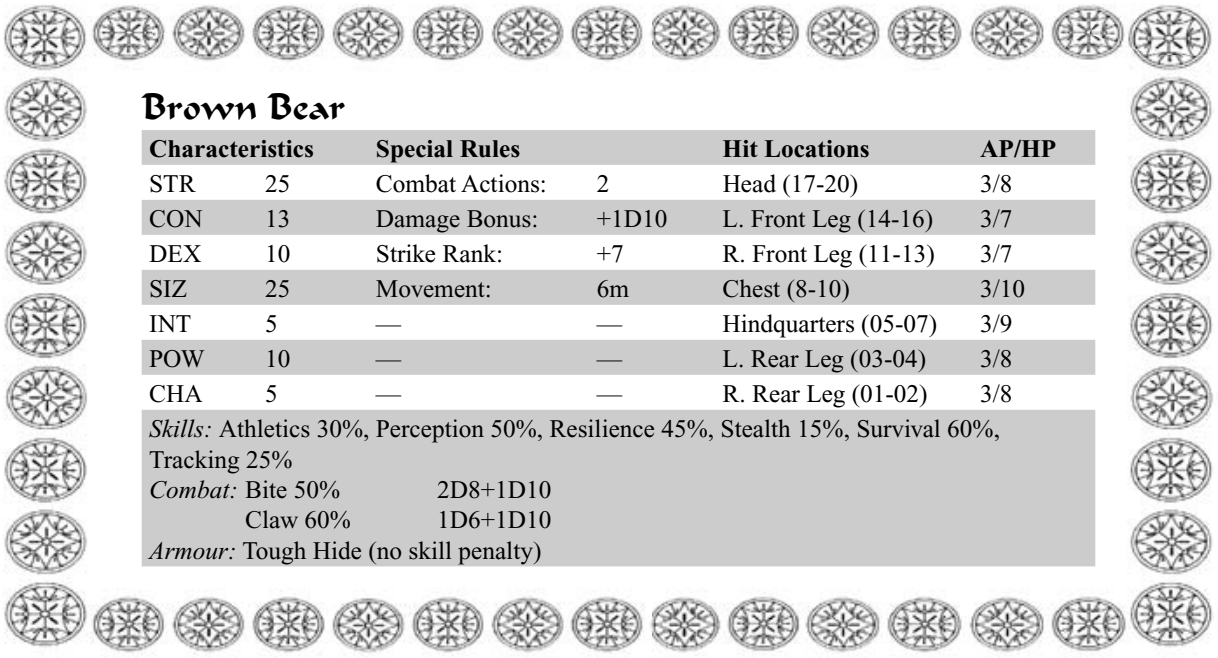
### Muroran

After nearly a week of walking, the party will arrive at Muroran, the port town that was their original destination. Before the party continues their journey, Kanamuchi will suggest that he and his crew stay behind and try to secure passage on a ship for the journey back. Any supplies will need to be split up between the two groups and Kanamuchi will remain here until the party returns.

### Bear

As the party trek through the mountains and forests, they will encounter a bear. The bear will either be in the forests or in its den (usually a cave). Asherine will explain that bears are manifestations of the Ainu gods and it is a great honour to kill one and release the god's spirit.





## Brown Bear

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 25	Combat Actions: 2	Head (17-20)	3/8
CON 13	Damage Bonus: +1D10	L. Front Leg (14-16)	3/7
DEX 10	Strike Rank: +7	R. Front Leg (11-13)	3/7
SIZ 25	Movement: 6m	Chest (8-10)	3/10
INT 5	—	Hindquarters (05-07)	3/9
POW 10	—	L. Rear Leg (03-04)	3/8
CHA 5	—	R. Rear Leg (01-02)	3/8

*Skills:* Athletics 30%, Perception 50%, Resilience 45%, Stealth 15%, Survival 60%, Tracking 25%

*Combat:* Bite 50%      2D8+1D10  
Claw 60%      1D6+1D10

*Armour:* Tough Hide (no skill penalty)

The bear will not attack if the party keep their distance but Asherine will encourage the party to kill it anyway. The players will not fully understand his attitude about the bear and if they do not attack, Asherine will force the issue and charge at the bear.

follow them. At a suitable opportunity, the travellers will attempt to rob the party of anything valuable. If they get away with anything essential (such as the Elemental Blades) the party will be forced to track them down.

## Broken Bridge

The party come across a broken bridge where they need to cross. This could be a bridge over river rapids or a deep ravine. It appears to have been damaged in a storm and there is no way to repair it. Asherine will not know another way so the party must attempt to climb the ravine or brave the rapids.

## Wolf Pack

The party come across a pack of 1D6+3 wolves. Asherine will explain that the wolves will not attack if they are not alarmed and the party must walk around the wolves quietly and slowly. Each party member must make a Stealth test and if more than two of them fail the wolves will attack.

Alternatively, the bridge is only partially damaged, so the party can attempt to cross it. However, sections of the bridge may break with their weight.

If the wolves do attack then each one will attack a different party member. If the alpha male is killed, the rest of the pack will run away.

## Travellers

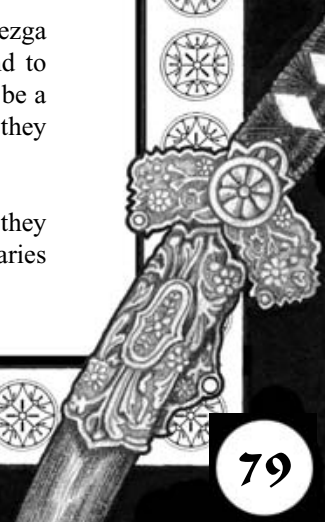
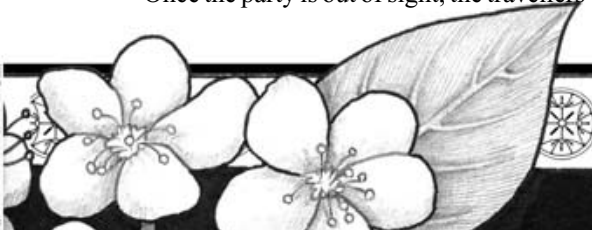
The party meet some Ainu travellers who will have the same reaction to the players that they experienced in the villages. Asherine speaks in favour of the players and the travellers will appear to accept his word, asking if the party has anything to trade. The travellers will have little to barter with and will eventually be on their way.

## Mercenary Group

Many of the Ainu mercenaries that fought for Enezga have now returned home, so the party are bound to encounter a group of them at some point. It may be a band of them camped out by the road or perhaps they are enjoying a drink at an inn.

Once the party is out of sight, the travellers will secretly

Wherever the players meet them, the fact that they were recently enemies will be clear. The mercenaries







<b>Travellers</b>				
Characteristics	Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	13	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20) -5
CON	13	Damage Bonus:	+1D2	L. Arm (16-18) -4
DEX	14	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15) -4
SIZ	12	Strike Rank:	+13	Chest (10-12) -7
INT	12	—	—	Abdomen (07-09) -6
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06) -5
CHA	14	—	—	R. Leg (01-03) -5
<i>Basic Skills:</i> Athletics 32%, Dodge 34%, Perception 31%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 35%, Stealth 53%				
<i>Combat:</i> Scimitar 49%		1D6+1		
Shortbow 32%		1D8		
<i>Armour:</i> None				

will be extremely hostile to the players and Asherine's attempts to diffuse the situation will be met with insults and curses. If the players wish to avoid a fight then they will have to tread carefully.

### The Mountain

After two weeks of hard walking, the party will eventually come to the huge mountain situated in the middle of Hokkaido. As the players look up at the mountain, they will see that much of it is covered in snow so if they do not have any warm winter clothing it could be a very short trip. Asherine will suggest they make camp for the night and begin the ascent at first light.

### Climbing the Mountain

It will take two days to climb the mountain. The first day is easy going but slow. The party must walk up a narrow mountain trail. At one point the path becomes very narrow and caution is required to edge across it. Each party member must make an Athletics check.

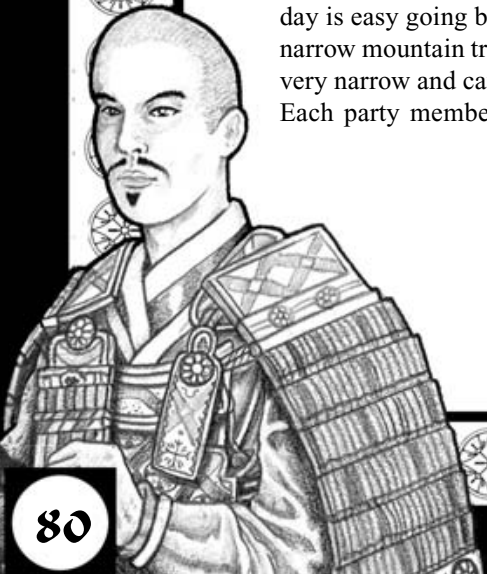
If they fail they will slip but can make an additional Athletics check to grab hold of the ledge. An adjacent character can make an Athletics roll to pull them up and catch them if need be. If the initial roll was a fumble then the character cannot roll to grab the ledge but another party member can still attempt to catch them.

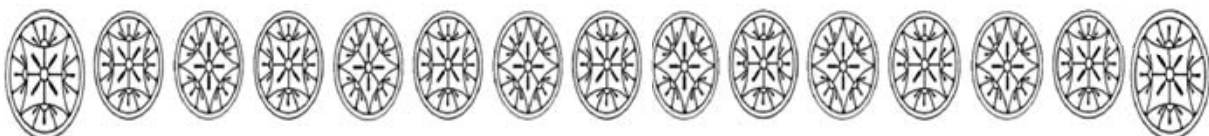
Towards the end of the first day, the party will find a small plateau where they can make camp. It is only a small area, so they will spend the night being cold and uncomfortable.

The second day will be much more difficult. The trail will come to an end after a short walk, so they must now climb the rest of the way. Multiple Athletics checks are required for each person, unless one person climbs ahead with some rope.

### The Cave

Around midday, the party will spot a small cave entrance. The players will most likely wish to





### Wolf (alpha male)

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 14	Combat Actions: 3	Head (17-20)	2/6
CON 13	Damage Bonus: +1D2	L. Front Leg (14-16)	2/6
DEX 14	Strike Rank: +9	R. Front Leg (11-13)	2/6
SIZ 12	Movement: 5m	Forequarters (8-10)	2/7
INT 5	—	Hindquarters (05-07)	2/7
POW 10	—	L. Rear Leg (03-04)	2/6
CHA 5	—	R. Rear Leg (01-02)	2/6

*Traits:* Night Sight

*Skills:* Athletics 77%, Dodge 57%, Perception 55%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 57%, Survival 40%, Tracking 60%

*Combat:* Bite 62% 1D8+1D2

Claw 42% 1D6+1D2

*Armour:* Hide (no skill penalty)

### Wolf (pack)

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 11	Combat Actions: 2	Head (17-20)	2/5
CON 13	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Front Leg (14-16)	2/5
DEX 12	Strike Rank: +8	R. Front Leg (11-13)	2/5
SIZ 10	Movement: 5m	Forequarters (8-10)	2/6
INT 5	—	Hindquarters (05-07)	2/6
POW 10	—	L. Rear Leg (03-04)	2/5
CHA 5	—	R. Rear Leg (01-02)	2/5

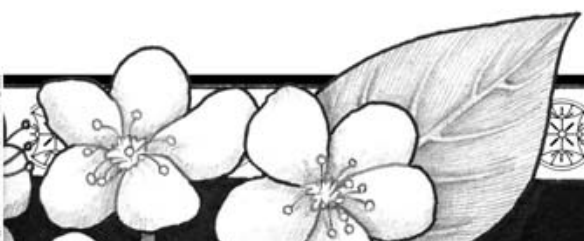
*Traits:* Night Sight

*Skills:* Athletics 75%, Dodge 55%, Perception 55%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 55%, Survival 40%, Tracking 60%

*Combat:* Bite 60% 1D8

Claw 30% 1D6

*Armour:* Hide (no skill penalty)



investigate but they are also exhausted and the cave would provide a good place to rest and shelter from the biting winds. As they enter the cave read out the following:

*You crawl into the entrance and find yourselves in a small cave. Sheltered from the bracing winds, you take a moment to catch your breath. Sunlight streams through cracks in the mountain above and you see the skeletal remains of a person in decayed armour.*



*Lying beside the body is what looks to be a sword bound in leather. You carefully unwrap the hide to reveal a katana, its handle is woven with white silk. Its appearance and craftsmanship confirms that this is the Blade of Wind.*

If the players examine the cave further, they will see some writing on the wall. If they illuminate it with a lantern or torch, read out the following:

*The writing appears to have been written in charcoal. It has faded over the years but you can just make out what it says:*

*'The journey here was long and arduous. I do not understand the ways of these people so I sought refuge in the highest mountain. It seems a fitting resting place for myself and the Blade. Here we both shall rest until such a time that the Blades are needed again.*

*Osamu, the Warrior of Wind.'*

Now that the players have the blade, they must climb back down the mountain (same Athletics checks as before) and make their way home.

## The Journey Home

The party must travel back to Muroan to meet Kanamuchi and his crew. The journey will take just over a week. Remember to include any repeat encounters such as settlements and broken bridges that the players must pass on their way back. You can also include some additional encounters if you like.

Once the party arrive at Muroan, Kanamuchi will be waiting for them as promised. He will inform the players that he has secured passage on a ship that is due to return here in a week.

After waiting for a week, the Ainu ship will return on schedule. It is a small ship with 15 crew and the captain. The captain will take payment up front. If the party do not have enough money, they will have to work to earn their keep during the voyage. Asherine will say farewell to the players and the ship will set sail for a port town in northern Honshu where they are due to arrive in six days.

## Betrayal

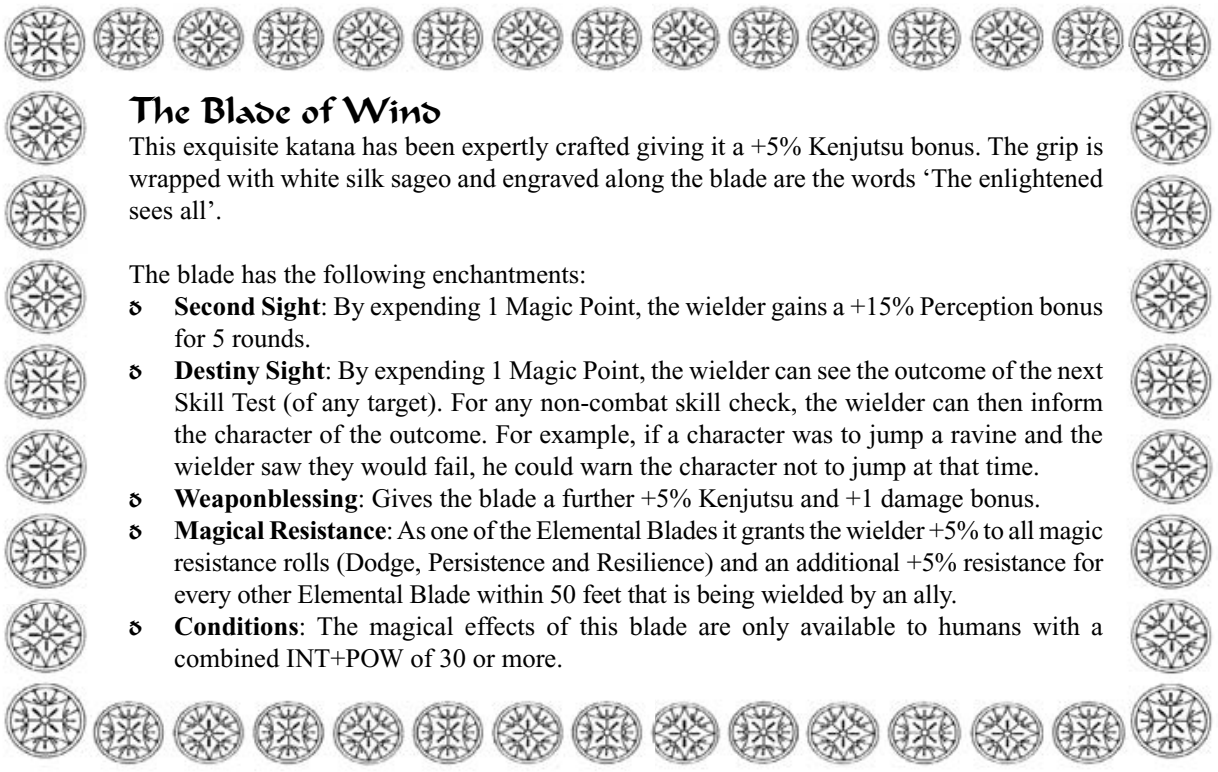
The Ainu are not friendly to the players but they are not hostile either. The party will join the crew in the galley where the cook prepares modest meals for them all. The ship's crew spend much of their time drinking and gambling and will even invite some of the players to join them.

A few days into the journey, the party will join the crew for the evening meal. As the evening draws on, the players will begin to feel drowsy. The laughter gets louder as their heads begin to throb and their vision blurs. A few minutes later they all black out.

When they wake up, the entire party are chained up in the hold and their possessions have been removed. They will feel dehydrated, exhausted and suffering from pounding headaches. Whatever poison was slipped into their food or drink was only designed to knock them unconscious but the side effects will take several hours to wear off. After the players have waited a short while, read out the following:

*The ship's captain enters the hold with two of his men. The crew place some bread and water on the floor. The captain surprises you by speaking in broken Japanese.*

## The Blade of Wind



## The Blade of Wind

This exquisite katana has been expertly crafted giving it a +5% Kenjutsu bonus. The grip is wrapped with white silk sageo and engraved along the blade are the words 'The enlightened sees all'.

The blade has the following enchantments:

- ♣ **Second Sight:** By expending 1 Magic Point, the wielder gains a +15% Perception bonus for 5 rounds.
- ♣ **Destiny Sight:** By expending 1 Magic Point, the wielder can see the outcome of the next Skill Test (of any target). For any non-combat skill check, the wielder can then inform the character of the outcome. For example, if a character was to jump a ravine and the wielder saw they would fail, he could warn the character not to jump at that time.
- ♣ **Weaponblessing:** Gives the blade a further +5% Kenjutsu and +1 damage bonus.
- ♣ **Magical Resistance:** As one of the Elemental Blades it grants the wielder +5% to all magic resistance rolls (Dodge, Persistence and Resilience) and an additional +5% resistance for every other Elemental Blade within 50 feet that is being wielded by an ally.
- ♣ **Conditions:** The magical effects of this blade are only available to humans with a combined INT+POW of 30 or more.

*'I sorry to drug you but is easier and my men no get hurt. Enezga want you and pay well. You will be fed until arrive at Ryo but if you try leave we will kill.'*

This will no doubt come as a shock to the players who will be wondering why Enezga wants them. The Ainu do not know Enezga's motives either; they are just doing it for the money.

## Escape

Knowing they are headed to Ryo, the players have several weeks to plan an escape. Once they are free, they will either need to take control of the ship or take a boat without being noticed. The ship's crew consists of the Ainu Captain, five Ainu Warriors and 10 Ainu Soldiers.

## The Hold

The players are chained up at the far end of the hold. Crates and barrels are piled at the opposite end, which contain the supplies for the journey. Although their chains allow a certain amount of movement (far enough

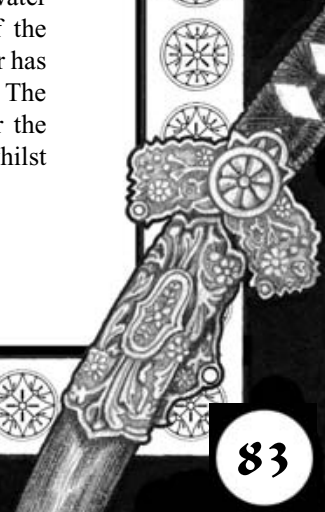
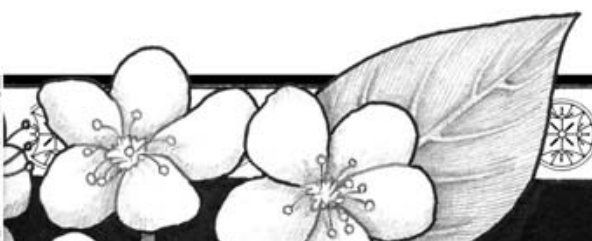
to get food and use 'the bucket'), they are never unlocked so the players will need to find a way to break free.

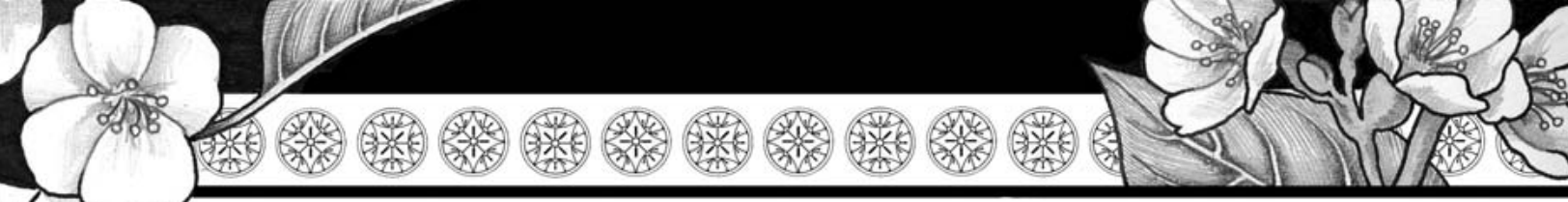
There are only two ways out of the hold. There is the main access door at one end of the hold and a loading hatch above where cargo can be raised or lowered from the deck.

## Routine

The Ainu follow a fairly strict routine and the door is always kept locked apart from when they come into the hold. At random intervals, the cook will come into the hold to get supplies of food and drink. He is usually accompanied by another soldier but not always.

Two soldiers visit twice a day to bring food and water that is placed on the floor just within reach of the players. One Ainu carries the food whilst the other has his sword ready in case the players try anything. The only other visit is first thing in the morning for the bucket change. One Ainu changes the bucket whilst the other stands guard.





After a week or so, the Ainu will start to tire of their tasks and may make a mistake giving the players an opportunity to strike. This could be anything from getting too close to them to forgetting to lock the door.

### **Breaking the Chains**

The chains are not in perfect condition and can be broken. Any player can attempt to break the chains using a Brute Force Athletics check with a -50% penalty. However, if they try to pull the mounts from the timbers they will only get a -30% penalty.

If they have a suitable tool they can attempt to break the chains or pry the mountings from the timber. The same penalties apply as above but this will give them a second chance if they failed with brute force.

Depending where the chains are broken, they will still have the manacles and part of the chain attached to their wrists. They should realise that if they make too much noise, the Ainu may come to investigate any sounds they make.

### **Gaining an Ally**

This method is very difficult, especially considering the language barrier but the players might try to befriend some of the Ainu that regularly visit them. They can offer money or explain that once Enezga has what he wants, he could just as easily kill the crew rather than pay them.

Whatever approach they use, they must make an Influence check with a -50% modifier. This penalty can be lowered depending on their approach and how well they roleplay the situation. If successful, the Ainu will get a Persistence check and will only betray his comrades if he fails the roll.

If the players do manage to gain an ally, there will be limits to what he does. He will not fight his crewmates but he will help the players escape. He will find something they can use to get the chains off and will then help them to a boat without being seen.

### **Ambushing the Ainu**

The soldiers that deliver the food and change the bucket come just within the reach of

the chains. The players would have to be quick and fighting would be difficult (especially if they are still chained) but they could attempt to grapple the guards when the moment is right.

If the players are still in their chains then only 1D4 of them will be able to reach the Ainu and they will get -10% to their Unarmed skill checks. The guards will not have the keys to unlock the chains but they will have swords and knives that could be used to help break them.

If the players have already broken free of the chains then they can either act as if they are still chained up or jump the Ainu as they come through the door.

Whatever the circumstances, the players will gain surprise on the Ainu but after the second round of combat they will shout for help. If any additional Ainu join the fight, they will try to put the players down but avoid killing them if possible.

### **Sneaking Around the Ship**

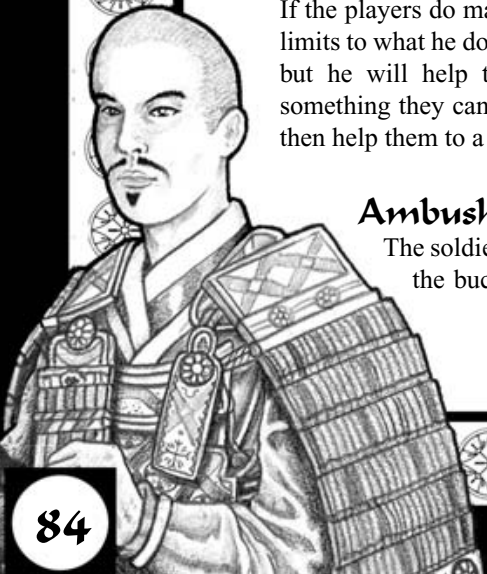
Once the players are free of the hold, they will need to sneak around the ship to accomplish their goals. Due to the confined layout of the ship, the party must proceed with caution as it is not always easy to detect if any crew are nearby. They must make Perception checks to determine if any Ainu are close. During the day, there is a 60% chance the players will be near one or more crewmen and at night there is a 30% chance.


If the players spot a crewman nearby, he will either be walking past the party or the party need to get past the crewman. Either way, opposed Stealth against Perception checks are required for the party to avoid detection.

If the party are spotted, or they decide to ambush the crewman, the Ainu will attempt to shout for help in the second or third round of combat. The sound of fighting might also be heard, any crewmen nearby will get a Perception check and if successful they will investigate or sound a general alarm.

### **Retrieving their Belongings**

The players will want to get their possessions, especially the Elemental Blades, before they leave. If one of the Ainu helped them escape, he will tell the





players where their belongings are, if not they must search the ship themselves.

The captain has locked the players' belongings in a chest. The chest is in the captain's quarters, which is in the lower deck toward the bow of the ship. The captain spends most of his time around the ship and only goes to his quarters to rest, so there is a good chance that the room will be empty. If the players go there at night the captain will probably be asleep.

The doors and hatches on the ship are never locked but the chest inside the captain's quarters will be. The lock will either need to be picked or broken. Alternatively, the chest can be smashed but any nearby crewmen will get a Perception check to hear the noise.

### Stealing a Boat

There are only two boats on the ship, each one capable of holding 10 men. One is on the port side and the other to starboard. The players would have seen these when they boarded the ship in Muroan. However, they must get to a boat undetected and lower it into the water without being seen or heard. Their best chance of doing this would be at night.

### Taking Control of the Ship

If the players are feeling particularly brave (or stupid), they can try to take control of the ship. This will mean fighting most of the crew. The party can start by taking out a few crewmen quietly but it will not be long before the crew is alerted and a full scale battle ensues.

If the players are obviously winning, then the remaining crew will either jump overboard or surrender. Once the battle is won, Kanamuchi and his crew will pilot the ship to a friendly port on Honshu.

### Failure

If the party do not escape, the meeting with Enezga will take place as planned. This is covered in the next chapter.

### Home Free

Assuming they escaped from the Ainu, the players will eventually make it to the mainland. Depending on how long it took them to escape will depend on where they make port. If the party stole a boat then they will be at the mercy of the tides and may have to spend several days adrift on the ocean.

Once they are safely on land they can make their way back to the nearest friendly settlement where they can rest. If there is a military presence they will be able to requisition horses to take them to their destination.

If Kanamuchi and any of his crew survived, they will head to Unnan and report to Hirozaki. The players may wish to join Kanamuchi or head to Nara to see Natsui.

### Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are as follows:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Fighting Akkorokamui	1 Hero Point
Finding the Blade of Wind	1 Hero Point
Escaping the Ainu	1 improvement roll
Other roleplaying bonus/ penalty	GM determined

# THE SORCERER

*"The Way of dying is not limited to warriors alone."  
The Book of Five Rings, Miyamoto Musashi*

Once the players have all five Elemental Blades, they must report to Hirozaki in Unnan. When they are ready to speak to him, read out the following:

*Minamoto no Hirozaki greets you kindly. He is clearly pleased that you have recovered the legendary Elemental Blades.*

*'You have done well and exceeded my expectations. Now the really hard task is upon you, you must confront and defeat Sushigawa. Even with the blades this will not be easy but first you must find him.*

*Our intelligence indicates that he spends most of his time at a secret base but we do not know where it is. My generals and agents have been instructed to listen out for any information that can give you a lead as to his whereabouts. Until then, I suggest you rest and prepare for the task ahead.*

*I will send for you when we hear more.'*

If the party have found all five Elemental Blades, they will receive a bonus On for retrieving all of the legendary swords. They will now have several months of waiting, which they can use to train or attend to any other matters.

## A Possible Lead

A few months after they last spoke with Hirozaki, the players will be summoned to his war room. Read out the following:

*'Taira Hitoshi at Ataro has interrogated a dai bakemono, who revealed that Sushigawa is expected to visit Enezga at Ryo in two days. We are not sure where he is travelling from but rumours suggest he will be riding in from the south.*

*You must find a suitable location south of Ryo and wait for him there. What escort he will*

*have is unknown but as you know, a smaller group will have a greater chance of infiltrating enemy territory.'*

The party must leave as soon as they can so they can get into position to ambush Sushigawa. It will take over a day to ride south of Ryo and they must be cautious. As the party travels through enemy territory, you can use the encounters described in Appendix II.

## Ambush


The players will need to find a suitable location where they can hide and set an ambush. Once in position, the party will have to wait for about half a day before they see a large kuruma approaching, guarded by a band of well armed bakemono.

The fight will be tough but the party will be able to defeat the bakemono. During the fight, the players might get suspicious that Sushigawa has not attacked. Once all of the bakemono escort are dead, the players will no doubt look inside the kuruma and they will be surprised to find that it is empty. As they try to figure out what is going on, read out the following:

*You hear the familiar sound of bakemono cries echoing all around you. Looking around you see a massive force of bakemono approaching from all sides. You prepare to fight this impossible battle as the horde advances towards you but instead of charging they surround you and hold position. Through the throng, a dai bakemono strides out.*

*'Lay down your weapons and you will not be harmed. Enezga has ordered you be brought before him. Our master would prefer you alive but if you fight us your lives will end here.*

The players are hopelessly outnumbered leaving them no option but to surrender. The bakemono will take their weapons and tie their hands behind their backs. The party will then be shoved inside the kuruma. If the players decide to fight, the result will be the same only much more painful as they are beaten unconscious.



Bound and crammed inside the kuruma, they will be escorted to Ryo where they will arrive several hours later. The players will look out of the kuruma and see thousands of bakemono camped on the plains outside the town. The defences around Ryo have been strengthened and the additional towers have been completed. The once peaceful fishing town of Ryo is now an enemy stronghold.

The kuruma will be led through the main gates into the town. The carriage makes its way down the main street and the players will see that all of the buildings are occupied by bakemono. They pass by the harbour and the carriage finally comes to a stop outside the warehouses where Chogen fought several years ago. The warehouse security has been improved with strengthened walls and more guards patrolling the area.

The party will be bundled out of the kuruma and pushed into the small warehouse, where they will be chained to the supporting pillars. Unfortunately for the players, these chains are very strong and securely fastened.

## Enezga's Gambit

Enezga has known for some time that he has been used by Sushigawa for the sorcerer's own ambitions. Until recently, that goal also served Enezga's plan but since the Ainu left Honshu, Sushigawa's involvement in the war has been minimal as far as Enezga is concerned.

Enezga's forces have lost many recent engagements with the clans and Sushigawa threatens Enezga's authority by commanding more of the bakemono. Not only is Enezga losing face amongst his own kind but he knows that Sushigawa will soon have no need for him.

If Enezga is to be victorious, Sushigawa must be destroyed but the sorcerer is far too powerful for Enezga to defeat. Enezga has tortured information from a captured general, detailing that Hirozaki has sent out an elite group to recover some magical items that, in the right hands, have the power to take on a sorcerer of Sushigawa's power.

Enezga and the players have a mutual enemy in Sushigawa and Enezga is going to help the party to find him. Enezga knows it is a risky move to help his enemy but since both sides are threatened by Sushigawa, his death benefits them all.

## Meeting Enezga

Shortly after the players have been secured in the warehouse, Enezga will pay them a visit and make his offer. Read out the following:

*The warehouse doors open and for the first time you see your enemy, Enezga. He is large for a dai bakemono. A katana is strapped across his back, which must be the fabled Sword of Seven Cuts.*

*He carries a large bundle under his arm, which he sets down on a table. Enezga unrolls the bundle to reveal the Elemental Blades. He picks each one up in turn to examine and test them before nodding approvingly. Enezga speaks in a surprisingly clear and intelligent voice.*

*'As fine a set of swords as ever I saw. But their power is not available to the likes of me. We may be at war with each other but we both have a common enemy. I had you brought here to make sure that you kill Sushigawa. He hides away like a coward but I can tell you where he is.*

*You can take these blades with you; you will need them when you travel to Kyushu. Sushigawa has a small village on the coast, in the northern region. He employs ninjas to protect and to run the village. You must move quickly, for I do not know how long he will stay there.*

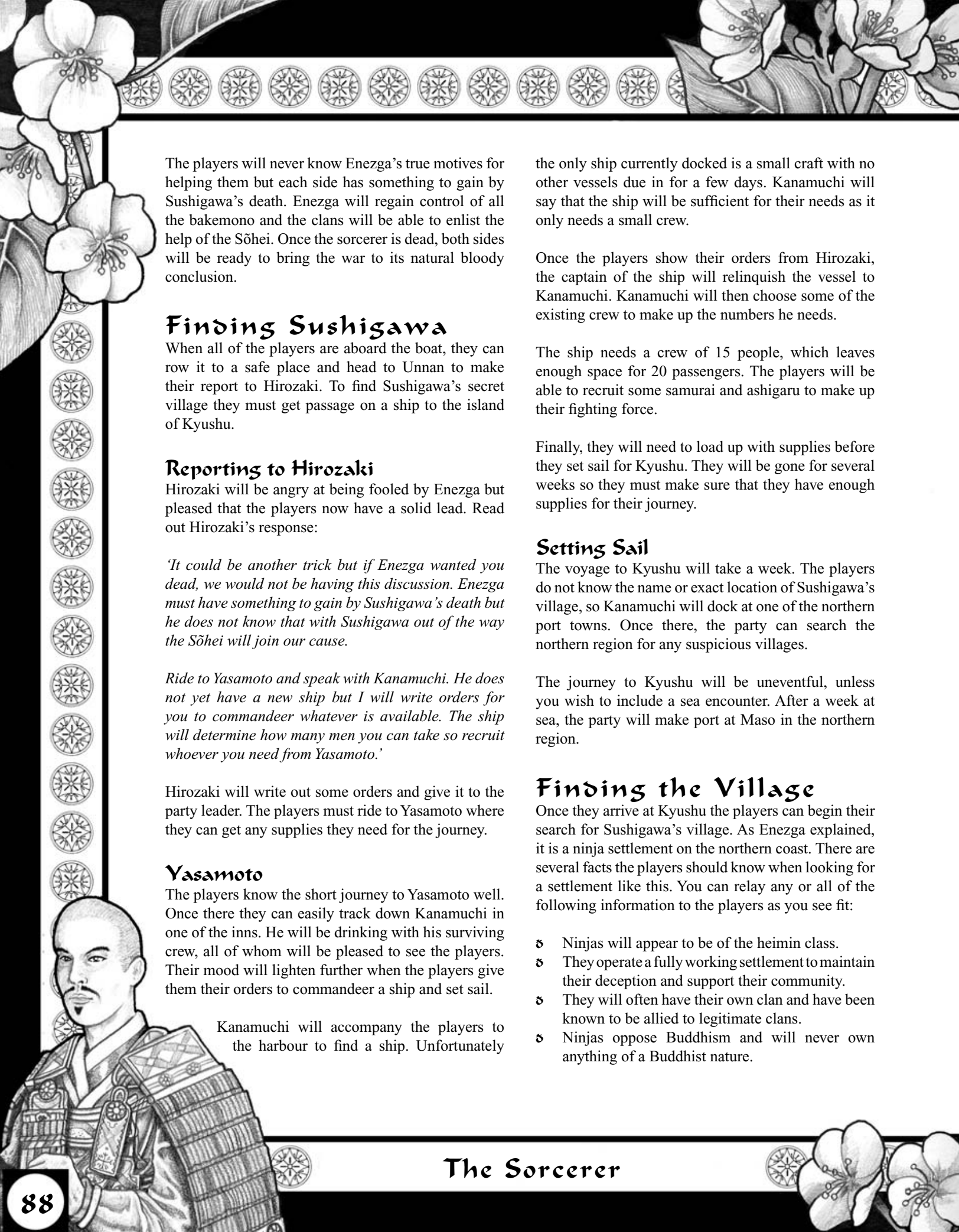
*There is a boat waiting for you at the harbour. Your things will be loaded onboard and you will be allowed to leave. Next time we meet I will not spare your lives but if you rid me of Sushigawa I promise your deaths will be quick.'*

*Enezga takes the blades and leaves. Shortly after, a group of bakemono unchain you and take you to a boat waiting in the harbour. As promised, all of your belongings are inside and you are allowed to leave.*



## The Sorcerer





The players will never know Enezga's true motives for helping them but each side has something to gain by Sushigawa's death. Enezga will regain control of all the bakemono and the clans will be able to enlist the help of the Sōhei. Once the sorcerer is dead, both sides will be ready to bring the war to its natural bloody conclusion.

## Finding Sushigawa

When all of the players are aboard the boat, they can row it to a safe place and head to Unnan to make their report to Hirozaki. To find Sushigawa's secret village they must get passage on a ship to the island of Kyushu.

## Reporting to Hirozaki

Hirozaki will be angry at being fooled by Enezga but pleased that the players now have a solid lead. Read out Hirozaki's response:

*'It could be another trick but if Enezga wanted you dead, we would not be having this discussion. Enezga must have something to gain by Sushigawa's death but he does not know that with Sushigawa out of the way the Sōhei will join our cause.'*

*Ride to Yasamoto and speak with Kanamuchi. He does not yet have a new ship but I will write orders for you to commandeer whatever is available. The ship will determine how many men you can take so recruit whoever you need from Yasamoto.'*

Hirozaki will write out some orders and give it to the party leader. The players must ride to Yasamoto where they can get any supplies they need for the journey.

## Yasamoto

The players know the short journey to Yasamoto well. Once there they can easily track down Kanamuchi in one of the inns. He will be drinking with his surviving crew, all of whom will be pleased to see the players. Their mood will lighten further when the players give them their orders to commandeer a ship and set sail.

Kanamuchi will accompany the players to the harbour to find a ship. Unfortunately

the only ship currently docked is a small craft with no other vessels due in for a few days. Kanamuchi will say that the ship will be sufficient for their needs as it only needs a small crew.

Once the players show their orders from Hirozaki, the captain of the ship will relinquish the vessel to Kanamuchi. Kanamuchi will then choose some of the existing crew to make up the numbers he needs.

The ship needs a crew of 15 people, which leaves enough space for 20 passengers. The players will be able to recruit some samurai and ashigaru to make up their fighting force.

Finally, they will need to load up with supplies before they set sail for Kyushu. They will be gone for several weeks so they must make sure that they have enough supplies for their journey.

## Setting Sail

The voyage to Kyushu will take a week. The players do not know the name or exact location of Sushigawa's village, so Kanamuchi will dock at one of the northern port towns. Once there, the party can search the northern region for any suspicious villages.

The journey to Kyushu will be uneventful, unless you wish to include a sea encounter. After a week at sea, the party will make port at Maso in the northern region.

## Finding the Village

Once they arrive at Kyushu the players can begin their search for Sushigawa's village. As Enezga explained, it is a ninja settlement on the northern coast. There are several facts the players should know when looking for a settlement like this. You can relay any or all of the following information to the players as you see fit:

- ♣ Ninjas will appear to be of the heimin class.
- ♣ They operate a fully working settlement to maintain their deception and support their community.
- ♣ They will often have their own clan and have been known to be allied to legitimate clans.
- ♣ Ninjas oppose Buddhism and will never own anything of a Buddhist nature.

- ♣ Women have been known to train in the ways of the ninja.
- ♣ Travellers are usually safe in ninja settlements but if the inhabitants detect a threat they may act to protect their identity.

With these facts in mind, the party can begin their search. Kanamuchi and his crew will wait with the ship. Whilst the players are performing their initial reconnaissance, the Bushi should also remain behind to avoid arousing suspicion.

Maso is in the north east of Kyushu, so the players can head west along the coast and investigate the smaller settlements along the way. The party will not have any horses so it will take roughly a day to travel to between each village.

### Haramoto

The first coastal village they come to is Haramoto, which lies due north of Maso. It is a small fishing village with less than 20 houses. The people here look hard working and if asked, they will say they are of the Shiramoto family but they are not allied to any clan.

Successful Perception checks will reveal very few Buddhist trappings as the people here predominantly follow the Shinto faith.

The houses look reasonably new, indicating that the settlement has been established within the last five years. If the players ask around, the villagers will say there was a fire a few years ago that destroyed the buildings. Most of the people survived and rebuilt their community.

### Tamaku

Tamaku is a modest sized village situated west of Haramoto. Its inhabitants consist of both fishermen and farmers. Most people are of the Makoda family allied to the Fujiwara, so the villagers will not be particularly friendly to the party.

The village is well established and successful Perception checks will reveal that many of them follow the Buddhist faith as well as Shinto.

### Kitashi

This is Sushigawa's settlement and is inhabited by his ninja clan. Over the last two years, Sushigawa has built up this community from nothing. He recruited a number of ninjas and their families to build the settlement, so he has his own secret base of operations away from the clans and Enezga's forces. Once the village was sufficient to his needs, he left Ryo and took up residence here just over a year ago.

There are over 30 houses in Kitashi and a successful Perception check will reveal that they look quite new. If asked, the villagers will say that it is a new settlement that was created by the Kosaku family three years ago. The Kosaku are allied to the Otomo clan.

Although most of the inhabitants are Sushigawa's ninjas, some are innocent farmers who joined the community and remain ignorant of its purpose. Sushigawa allowed them to stay to help maintain the illusion of a normal settlement. A successful Perception check will reveal that some of these farmers are followers of Buddhism but most religious trappings will be Shinto.

Most of the houses are modest affairs except for the daimyo's house, which is a little more extravagant than the rest. Kenchiro is the jonin (clan leader) for the ninjas but uses the title 'daimyo' to maintain the deception to outsiders.

Sushigawa has a normal looking house near to the jonin's home. Sushigawa spends much of his time studying and plotting in a secret underground room beneath his house. There is a small chance that the players who glimpsed Sushigawa back in Ryo will recognise him. Anyone who saw the sorcerer torturing Chogen can make a Perception check with a -25% penalty (he wears normal clothes whilst in public and it was two years ago that they saw him).

### Fussaki

Situated west of Kitashi, Fussaki is also allied to the Otomo and both villages have a healthy trade relationship with each other. The people of Fussaki have no idea that most of their neighbours are actually ninjas working for a sorcerer.



## Ninja

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 12	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON 12	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX 14	Magic Points: 11	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ 12	Strike Rank: +13	Chest (10-12)	-/8
INT 13	On: 40	Abdomen (07-09)	-/7
POW 11	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/6
CHA 10	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/6

*Basic Skills:* Acrobatics 44%, Athletics 41%, Courtesy 30%, Dodge 47%, Influence 30%, Perception 36%, Persistence 31%, Resilience 33%, Stealth 52%

*Combat:* Ninja-to 46% 1D6+2  
Shinobi-kyu 54% 1D8

*Armour:* None

Ninjas use Smokescreen compound to distract and escape if required (see *Land of the Samurai* page 89 for details)



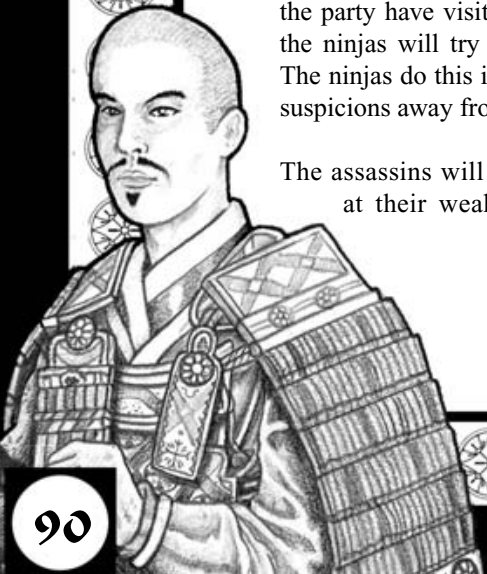
Fussaki is an old settlement, so most of the buildings here look old and used. Like their neighbours, they are mostly followers of Shinto but some Buddhist followers can be identified with a successful Perception check.

## Ambush

Unless the players have been extremely subtle, they will be followed out of Kitashi by three ninjas. The ninjas secretly follow the party to find out who they are and what they are doing.


Once the ninjas have enough information, one of them will report back to Kenchiro, who in turn will report to Sushigawa. The remaining two ninjas will wait until the party have visited at least one more village, then the ninjas will try to assassinate some of the party. The ninjas do this in the hope of diverting the party's suspicions away from Kitashi.

The assassins will strike at night when the party is at their weakest. Anyone awake at the time



## The Sorcerer





can make an opposed Perception check against the ninjas' Stealth. The ninjas will attack with bows first and only engage in melee when necessary.

## Confirming Suspicions

Once they have visited all the villages, the players should narrow the choices down to Haramoto and Kitashi. They must now plan how to confirm their suspicions, overpower the ninjas and fight Sushigawa.

One approach would be to force their opponents' hand. This could be done by taking the party's entire attacking force into the village to provoke a reaction and perhaps even making an obvious show of searching the houses. However, since they do not know how many of the villagers are ninjas, they could easily be outnumbered and overwhelmed.

Another tactic is to search some of the houses to see if any ninja weapons or tools can be found. However, unless they do this covertly, it could cause problems if they are caught in the act.

The players also have the option to subtly question some of the villagers. Since most of the party should be superior (in class) to most villagers, there is no risk of insult or loss of On. However, if they ask the wrong people and word gets around then the players will soon find themselves in trouble.

Finally, the players can quietly observe the villagers to see if the villagers' actions provide some clues. This will involve sneaking around, which is obviously best done at night. If the party remains undetected, they will have a chance to spot Sushigawa (Perception checks to see if they recognise him) or some of the ninjas sneaking out to perform a task for their master.

One important thing to remember is that the ninja do not want to give themselves away. So unless their hand is forced, they will wait for the party to leave before taking any action (if any).

## Investigating Haramoto

Whichever method the players choose, it will soon become apparent that Haramoto is just a simple fishing village that had the misfortune of burning down several

years ago. The fact that most of the villagers follow the Shinto faith did not help their cause either. Some of the locals may object to the methods used by the players but they will ultimately defer to them.

## Investigating Kitashi

When the party return to Kitashi, it will immediately draw the attention of the ninjas. If the players spend long enough in Kitashi or start poking around too much, Sushigawa will come to investigate and any player who saw him in Ryo may make another Perception check to see if they recognise him.

Perception checks will reveal that many of the villagers are keeping a close eye on them and if rolls beat the ninja's Stealth, the players will also spot people lurking in the shadows or behind cover.

## Final Conflict

If they are confident that they have the right village they can try to subdue the ninjas one at a time but eventually it will result in an open fight. Not all of the ninjas will be wearing black outfits, some will look like normal villagers so the players must be careful not to attack the wrong people. Sushigawa will allow his ninjas to defend the village but eventually he will intervene.

Until now, the players have been used to fighting bandits and forming the ranks of large battles. This fight will be very different as the ninjas use guerrilla style tactics and Sushigawa is a sorcerer of great power and destruction.

## Fighting the Ninjas

The ninjas greatest weapon is stealth. Many will use ranged attacks from rooftops and behind cover, whilst others make stealthy strikes from concealment. Depending on the players' actions before the fight, many ninjas have probably positioned themselves in strategic locations where they can shoot at the party.

Once fighting breaks out and their secret is revealed, the ninjas will not only attack the party but they will kill any of the villagers who do not serve Sushigawa. As the fight progresses, many of the players' allies will fall, as will the ninjas.



## The Sorcerer



There are as many ninjas as the plot demands. They do not fight as one unit like soldiers but are spread out around the village taking shots when the opportunity arises or emerging from the shadows to cut people down. The best strategy for fighting them is for the party to split up into small groups. They can then seek out each opponent and take them down and also cover each other from surprise attacks.

### Finding Sushigawa

If the players manage to go undetected, they can attempt to find Sushigawa. If they have already seen him then they will have the opportunity to follow him to his house. If they search the house he will not be there, but a Perception check will reveal the hidden trap door to his underground room where he is studying.

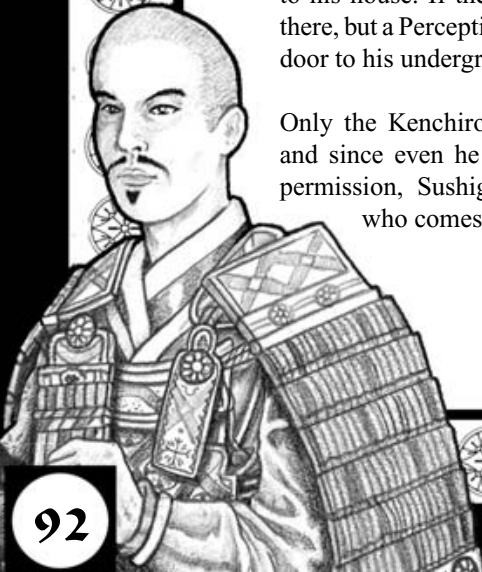
Only the Kenchiro will know of Sushigawa's room and since even he is not permitted to enter without permission, Sushigawa will be waiting for anyone who comes in.


### Fighting Sushigawa

Sushigawa will use his spells wisely and all of the Elemental Blades will need to be present to maximise the party's chances of defeating him. When Sushigawa enters combat with the players he will already have cast his Damage Resistance spell. Sushigawa will use Holdfast to root the players and if possible block others from getting to him and then he will use his Aura of Lightning and Bolts of Agony to cause as much damage as possible.

As soon as he is attacked, Sushigawa will call for assistance and it will not be long before several ninja join the fight to protect their master. Once Sushigawa realises the players have the Elemental Blades, he will command his ninjas to attack the blade bearers whilst he attacks those without the magical protection.

Sushigawa is not a courageous fighter and will use any tactic to defeat his enemies. He is also a cautious man, so whenever possible he will fight from behind cover and only reveal himself to unleash his spells.





It is important to note here that if anyone with an Elemental Blade falls or can no longer wield their weapon; it will not count towards the group resistance bonus (each blade must be wielded for the magical properties to work).

## Events

This fight is dangerous and important to the war against Enezga, so the pressure is on. To make the battle interesting, pick or roll on the table below for events during the fight. You can combine these and have several encounters happening at the same time, allowing you to split the party or force them to choose which situation to deal with.

1D12 Roll	Event
1	In the Shadows
2	Shooter on the Roof
3	Shooter at the Window
4	Shot in the Back
5	Ambushed
6	Villagers Attacked
7	Trapped
8	Hostage
9	Ally in Trouble
10	Fallen Comrade
11	Rushed
12	Sushigawa Arrives

### In the Shadows

The players all make a Perception check opposed by the ninja's Stealth. If successful they will notice a ninja hiding in the shadows. They will have 1D2 rounds to get to him before he shoots someone.

If the ninja is not spotted, then one of the players will be Shot in the Back or Ambushed as described.

### Shooter on the Roof

Successful Perception rolls will reveal a ninja on one of the rooftops who will shoot his bow next round. His legs are behind cover but the rest of his body can be hit.

If the players do not take him out this round, one of them will be Shot in the Back as described.

### Shooter at the Window

Successful Perception rolls with a -10% penalty will reveal a ninja inside one of the houses about to take a shot with his bow through a window. It will come down to initiative as to whether they can shoot him before he releases his arrow.

After he shoots he will hide out of sight so the players will need to enter the house to take him down.

If the Perception checks were unsuccessful then one of the players will be Shot in the Back as described.

### Shot in the Back

One of the ninjas will take a shot at one of the players. As long as they are wearing armour the shot should not be fatal. Once hit, any nearby allies can make a Perception check to see where the arrow was fired from (if they do not already know).

### Ambushed

A ninja hiding in the shadows or inside one of the houses will jump one of the players, gaining surprise. Any nearby allies who make a successful Perception check can react this round but the target cannot.

### Villagers Attacked

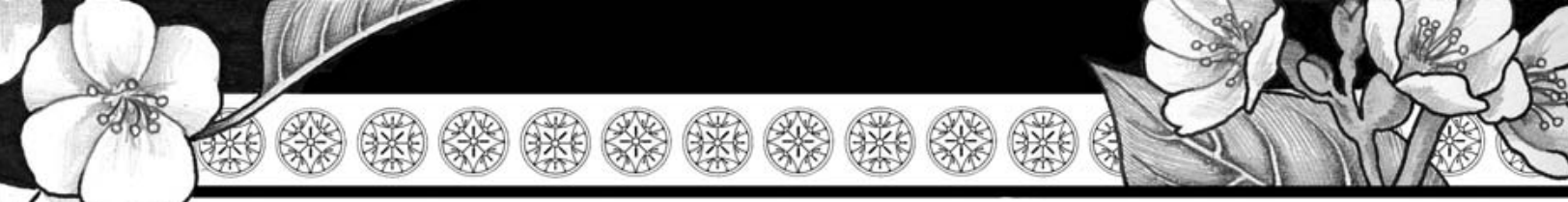
The players see a ninja running towards a small group of villagers preparing to cut them down. The villagers are unarmed and will be killed if the players do not intervene.

You can combine this with the Shot in the Back and Ambush encounters, so as the first ninja draws the players towards him, other ninjas prepare to strike the players as they come to protect the villagers.

Once the ninjas have been dealt with, the players must escort the villagers to safety in one of the houses nearby. Unless the house has already been cleared, there is a 15% chance that there will be a ninja inside waiting to strike.

### Trapped

Some of the players or Bushi are trapped in a house or alleyway. They are taking fire from several directions but are unable to break out without being shot. The remaining players must seek out the ninjas who have



pinned the party down before a lucky shot hits one of them.

#### Hostage

One of the ninjas takes a villager as a hostage, holding a tanto to their neck and using the victim as a human shield. He will use the hostage to get himself in a better position, to divert the players' attention or to escape if the battle is not going well for his side.

#### Ally in Trouble

One of the Bushi is in trouble. He is on his own and trying to defend against three ninjas. He will not last more than a few rounds before he is killed. If the players take too long to get to his aid, proceed to the Fallen Comrade encounter.

#### Fallen Comrade

One of the Bushi takes a serious hit and falls to the ground. He is not dead but a ninja moves in to make a killing blow. The players have one round to take out the ninja or their comrade will be killed.

#### Rushed

In a surprising move, a small group of ninjas rush towards the players in an all-out attack. This is an unusual tactic for the ninjas and the players must make a Persistence check or they will be surprised.

#### Sushigawa Arrives

Sushigawa leaves the safety of his house to join the fight. Any nearby ninjas will immediately come to his side to protect him. Sushigawa will use his spells with lethal efficiency as described earlier in the chapter.

## Aftermath

If the players have killed a lot of ninjas, you can assume that most are now dead or out of the fight, which will just leave them the task of killing Sushigawa. If the sorcerer is slain and there are still ninjas fighting, they will attempt to flee as soon as they realise that their master is dead.

Once the fight is over, there will be a lot of bodies. Ninjas, villagers and Bushi will litter the ground and the blood will run deep. Most of the villagers will be in a state of shock that the people they lived and worked with were in the service of a sorcerer. Some villagers will compose themselves and help out with the wounded and body duty.

If the players think to look for Taira Michimoto's brother (from the Conflicts of Faith chapter), they will not find him here. This will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Once the players are satisfied that Sushigawa and all of the ninjas are dead or gone, they can make their way back to the ship and head home. They may have won this battle but the price of this victory was quite high. Few of the Bushi will return with them.

## Reporting to Hirozaki

Hirozaki will give one of his rare smiles and say the following:

*'Good. You have struck a mighty blow against the enemy and cleared the way for us to end this war. We must now gather our forces and when the time is right we will crush Enezga and free Iwami province from bakemono tyranny.'*

## Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are listed below. Hirozaki will assign the party to simple duties for the next few weeks so that they can rest and train if required.

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Defeating Sushigawa	3 On 1 Hero Point
Other roleplaying bonus/ penalty	GM determined



# THE BATTLE OF RYO

*'It is a principle of the art of war that one should simply lay down his life and strike. If one's opponent also does the same, it is an even match, Defeating one's opponent is then a matter of faith and destiny.'*

*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo*

The year is now 1,002 A.D., several months after the events of the last chapter. The final battle to free Iwami province looms on the horizon. With the Ainu mercenaries gone and Sushigawa defeated, Enezga has been weakened and the allied clans must press their advantage. The outcome is uncertain but it is the best chance that they will have.

Hirozaki has been consolidating his forces and preparing for the final assault against Enezga. Positioning the army without alerting Enezga to his plans has been a slow and difficult process.

During this time, Hirozaki has kept the players stationed in Unnan so they have had time to rest after their recent travels and ordeals. The players would have had plenty of time to train and follow up any other stories or side quests that they may have been involved with.

Minamoto no Hirozaki will summon the players for an important task. When they are assembled, read out the following:

*'We are in the process of positioning our forces in key locations for a final offensive against Enezga. We had planned to attack Ryo in one month's time but we have heard news that the Fujiwara clan is mounting an army. Once we begin our attack, the Fujiwara plan to join the battle and claim the victory, for they know that without their help we may not win.'*

*They do this to raise their standing in the Imperial Court and reduce any influence the Minamoto and Taira clans would gain from such a victory. If they succeed, we will win the battle at Ryo but we would lose the political war against the Fujiwara.'*

*This means we must launch our offensive sooner than we had planned. We will now attack in three weeks time but we are vastly outnumbered. You are to travel to Nara and Mount Hiei to gain the support of the temples. The sōhei must gather at the Ryo plain in three weeks time if victory is to be certain.'*

## Trouble at Enryaku-ji

The players will set off for Enryaku-ji, near Mount Hiei. They know that with Sushigawa out of the way, the conflict between the Shingo and Tendai should be resolved (news of his death would have circulated quickly). Their mission to gather a sōhei army will seem simple compared to their recent deeds.

However, although the sorcerer may be dead, two of his agents stationed near Mount Hiei have continued his work. It is these two ninjas who have been manipulating the priests and holding the brother of Taira Michimoto. They are still using this leverage to maintain the conflict between the Buddhist sects.

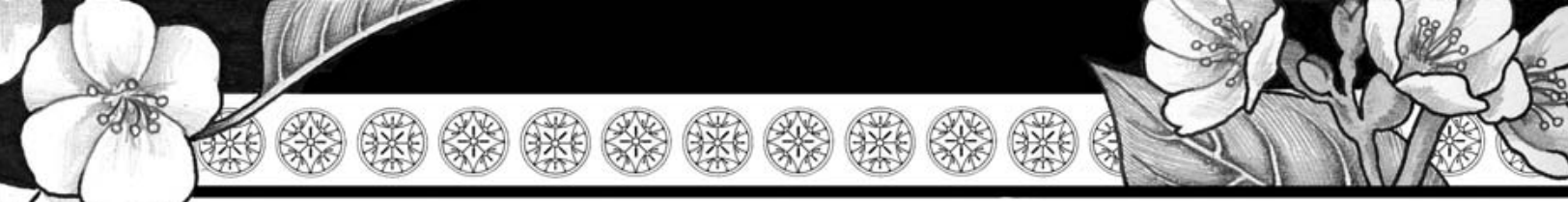
The journey to the mountain temple complex is a three day ride from Unnan. Once they arrive they will discover that the hostilities between the Tendai and Shingo continue to escalate. Before the party can ask for the sōhei to join the battle, the conflict must be resolved once and for all.

The party will no doubt wish to speak to Asai Jotaro and Taira Michimoto to find out why they still resist a peaceful resolution. The two clergy will speak to the players in private, where they are certain that they cannot be overheard.

The two clergy will explain that upon hearing of Sushigawa's demise, they were going to propose the Tendai resolve their dispute with the Shingo sect. However, before they could do so, Sushigawa's agents paid them a visit stating that the sorcerer's death was propaganda to aid the war effort.

Even if the players can convince the clergy that the party saw Sushigawa dead with their own eyes,





Sushigawa's agents still have the same hold over the two men. Jotaro and Michimoto will ask the players to free them of this situation so that the sects can resolve their differences.

### **Finding the Ninjas**

As one would expect, the two ninja agents are not easy to find. The players will need to lure them out and either interrogate them or follow them back to their secret hideout. Jotaro and Michimoto are certain that the agents keep a close eye on them, so any potential breach of their agreement would cause the agents to take appropriate action.

There are several ways the players can achieve this but the key here is to provoke the agents without revealing what the clergy know to anyone. Once the truth gets out, the Asai family secret will be revealed and Michimoto's brother will be killed.

Once the players put their plan into action, they will have to make sure that both clergy are protected at all times. They can do this noticeably or in secret. The two clergy will not spend all of their time together so the party will have to split up to maintain their protection.

### **Arranging a Council Meeting**

Jotaro and Michimoto can arrange a meeting with the other clergy in Enryaku-ji. If it was known that both of these men had an 'urgent matter' to discuss, the agents would have to intervene.

### **Closed Discussions**

The players can continue to have private and secret meetings with Jotaro and Michimoto. This will eventually get the attention of the ninja agents.

Alternatively, the players could have the two clergy engage in several private meetings with each other. Remember, Jotaro and Michimoto are not meant to know that the other is also being controlled by the

agents, so if they spend enough time together the ninjas will suspect that they are up to something.

### **Escorting the Clergy**

A risky strategy but the players can escort Jotaro and Michimoto to Nara or somewhere else where the clergy's presence could potentially expose the truth behind the conflict.

### **Searching for the Hideout**

Working on the assumption that the ninja agents may have their hideout close by, the players might want to try searching for it. This is very difficult and will require an element of luck and guesswork.

The players will of course have to be looking in the right area to see the hideout. It is located on a plateau on the south side of Mount Hiei. They will only be able to see this from the mountain path leading up to Enryaku-ji (-50% Perception) or from the ground on the south side of the mountain (-75% Perception).

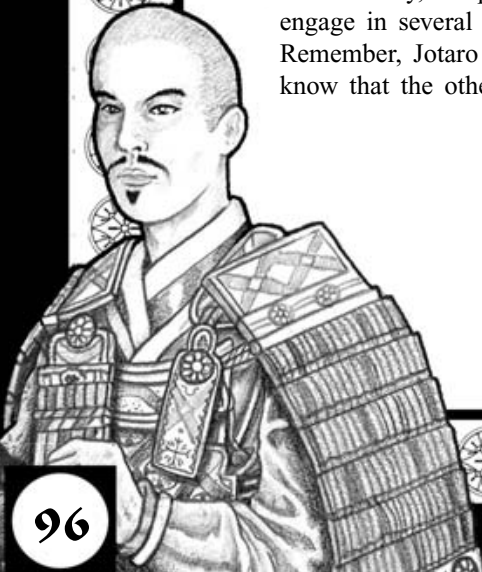
If they are lucky enough to find it, proceed to the Ninja Hideout section.

### **Agents Revealed**

Although the agents will deliver on their threats, they will want to prevent their secret from being exposed. They will follow the clergy and remind them of the price of disobedience. If the agents fear that the clergy will speak out then they will attempt to assassinate them.

The action they take may also depend on whether the party is visibly protecting them, or hiding close by to apprehend the ninjas once they show themselves. If the ninjas spot anyone in the party, they will attack them as well, using the same tactics as described in the previous chapter.

Once the ninjas have revealed themselves, there are several outcomes. If the players ambush them, they can



## Ninja Agent

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 13	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON 12	Damage Bonus: +1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX 14	Magic Points: 11	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ 13	Strike Rank: +13	Chest (10-12)	-/8
INT 13	On: 43	Abdomen (07-09)	-/7
POW 11	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/6
CHA 10	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/6
<i>Basic Skills:</i> Acrobatics 34%, Athletics 66%, Courtesy 45%, Dodge 45%, Influence 45%, Perception 40%, Persistence 41%, Resilience 33%, Stealth 52%			
<i>Combat:</i> Ninja-to 66% 1D6+2+1D2 Shinobi-kyu 44% 1D8+1D2			
<i>Armour:</i> None			

hopefully capture them for interrogation. If the ninjas start to lose the fight they will flee back to their hideout.

Alternatively, if the presence of the players acts as a deterrent, the ninjas will return to their hideout. Providing the players spotted the ninjas hiding nearby, the party can attempt to follow them back to the hideout.

### Interrogation

If the players have caught one of the agents, they can interrogate him to find out the location of the hideout. However, the ninjas will not give in easily and harsh methods may have to be employed to get the information required. If the captive ninja feels there is no escape, he will attempt seppuku.

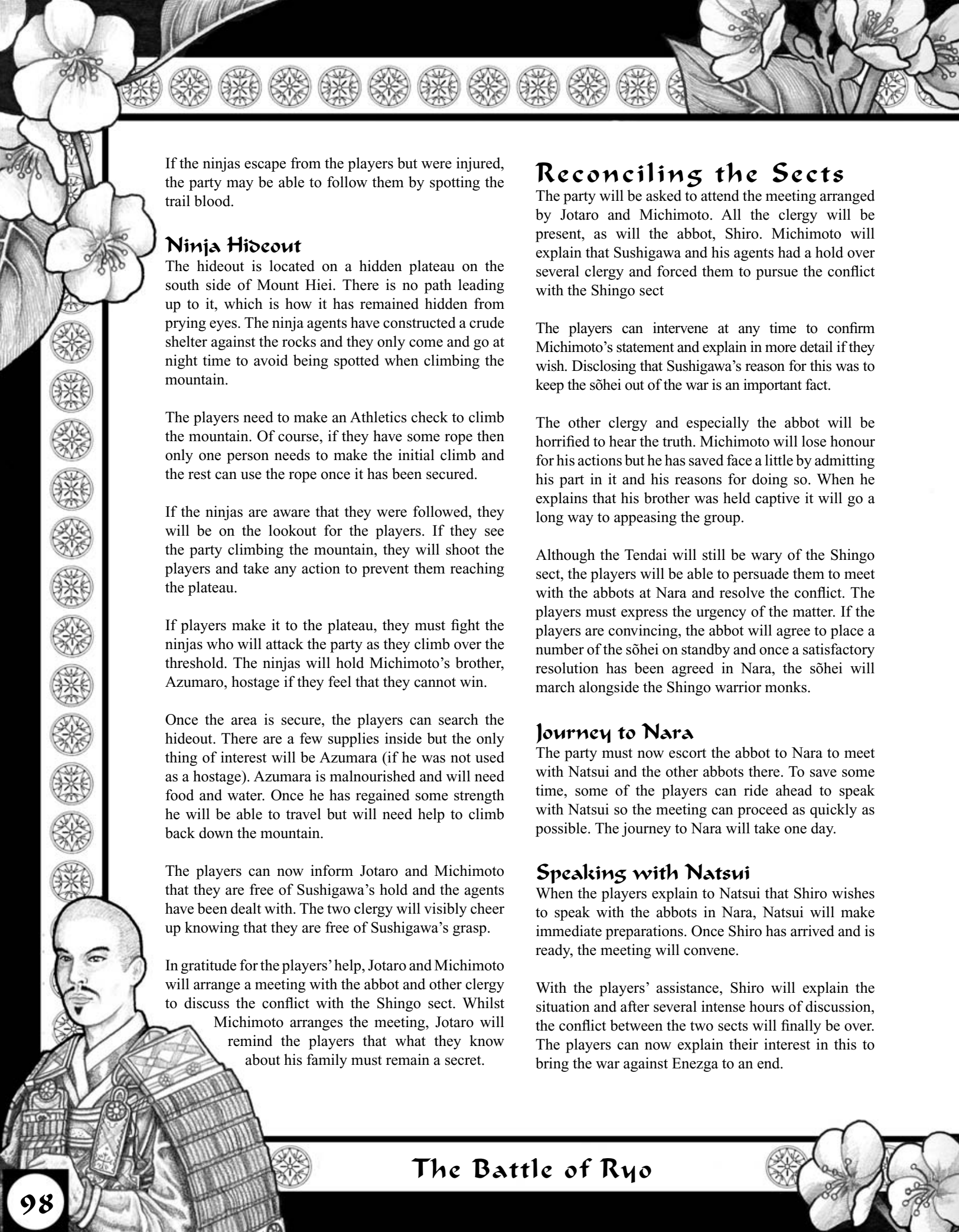
### Following the Agents

To successfully follow the ninja agents back to their hideout requires several Stealth checks opposed by the ninjas' Perception. This will be difficult as both parties will be using stealth to avoid being seen.

If the ninjas detect the players, they will take a different route to throw them off the trail. Once they are certain

they are no longer being followed, the ninjas will head for the hideout.





If the ninjas escape from the players but were injured, the party may be able to follow them by spotting the trail blood.

### **Ninja Hideout**

The hideout is located on a hidden plateau on the south side of Mount Hiei. There is no path leading up to it, which is how it has remained hidden from prying eyes. The ninja agents have constructed a crude shelter against the rocks and they only come and go at night time to avoid being spotted when climbing the mountain.

The players need to make an Athletics check to climb the mountain. Of course, if they have some rope then only one person needs to make the initial climb and the rest can use the rope once it has been secured.

If the ninjas are aware that they were followed, they will be on the lookout for the players. If they see the party climbing the mountain, they will shoot the players and take any action to prevent them reaching the plateau.

If players make it to the plateau, they must fight the ninjas who will attack the party as they climb over the threshold. The ninjas will hold Michimoto's brother, Azumaro, hostage if they feel that they cannot win.

Once the area is secure, the players can search the hideout. There are a few supplies inside but the only thing of interest will be Azumara (if he was not used as a hostage). Azumara is malnourished and will need food and water. Once he has regained some strength he will be able to travel but will need help to climb back down the mountain.

The players can now inform Jotaro and Michimoto that they are free of Sushigawa's hold and the agents have been dealt with. The two clergy will visibly cheer up knowing that they are free of Sushigawa's grasp.

In gratitude for the players' help, Jotaro and Michimoto will arrange a meeting with the abbot and other clergy to discuss the conflict with the Shingo sect. Whilst Michimoto arranges the meeting, Jotaro will remind the players that what they know about his family must remain a secret.

## **Reconciling the Sects**

The party will be asked to attend the meeting arranged by Jotaro and Michimoto. All the clergy will be present, as will the abbot, Shiro. Michimoto will explain that Sushigawa and his agents had a hold over several clergy and forced them to pursue the conflict with the Shingo sect

The players can intervene at any time to confirm Michimoto's statement and explain in more detail if they wish. Disclosing that Sushigawa's reason for this was to keep the sōhei out of the war is an important fact.

The other clergy and especially the abbot will be horrified to hear the truth. Michimoto will lose honour for his actions but he has saved face a little by admitting his part in it and his reasons for doing so. When he explains that his brother was held captive it will go a long way to appeasing the group.

Although the Tendai will still be wary of the Shingo sect, the players will be able to persuade them to meet with the abbots at Nara and resolve the conflict. The players must express the urgency of the matter. If the players are convincing, the abbot will agree to place a number of the sōhei on standby and once a satisfactory resolution has been agreed in Nara, the sōhei will march alongside the Shingo warrior monks.

### **Journey to Nara**

The party must now escort the abbot to Nara to meet with Natsui and the other abbots there. To save some time, some of the players can ride ahead to speak with Natsui so the meeting can proceed as quickly as possible. The journey to Nara will take one day.


### **Speaking with Natsui**

When the players explain to Natsui that Shiro wishes to speak with the abbots in Nara, Natsui will make immediate preparations. Once Shiro has arrived and is ready, the meeting will convene.

With the players' assistance, Shiro will explain the situation and after several intense hours of discussion, the conflict between the two sects will finally be over. The players can now explain their interest in this to bring the war against Enezga to an end.



## **The Battle of Ryo**



To convince the abbots to use the sōhei in the fight, the players must choose their words carefully. The abbots will never let their warriors get embroiled in a war but if the players explain that this is one final assault that will ultimately prevent the deaths of many Japanese people, most of the abbots will eventually agree to allow a portion of their sōhei to join the fight.

Kofuku-ji is primarily a Fujiwara temple, so the abbot will not allow his men to join the fight. The abbot of Daian-ji will also refuse but the remaining temples will agree to allow a detachment of their warriors to fight the bakemono in this one last battle.

## Commanding the Sōhei

Natsui will recommend that the players command the sōhei. Some of the abbots will be uneasy with this suggestion but once Natsui describes the players' deeds over the last few years, including the retrieval of the Elemental Blades, they will all agree.

Although many sōhei are stationed in Nara, some must still be left to defend the temples here. The players must travel to neighbouring temples to round up the troops. The sōhei from each of the temples in Nara and the temple at Enryaku-ji will form six separate units. Most of the units will be infantry but one mounted unit can be formed.

It is up to the players how they organise themselves but it is recommended that they each be given a unit to command. If there are more than six players, additional units can be created from the troops they enlist from other temples. If there are less than six players then NPC party members can command if available, if not Hirozaki will send commanders as they are required.

To ensure that they all get to the battle on time, each of the players should travel to other temples to enlist more troops. They will each be given orders, signed by the abbots, allowing them to request a portion of sōhei from each temple where jurisdiction allows.

Shiro must also be escorted back to Enryaku-ji. Once there, one of the players will be given command of the Tendai sōhei. That player must also travel to other Tendai temples to bolster his unit.

Each of the players will have approximately one week to gather their warriors. For each temple they visit, their unit of sōhei will grow. By the time the players arrive at Ryo, they will have a total force of nearly 2,000 sōhei.

## Battle at Ryo Plain

The players have now come full circle. The story began at the town of Ryo and here it will end one way or another. When the players first left Ryo, they were few in number and experience. Now they each command several hundred sōhei warrior monks and have achieved many glorious deeds of honour.

An unfortunate consequence of the discussions at Nara is that the Fujiwara now know that the allied clans have a force of sōhei and are moving quicker than planned. Hirozaki has therefore had to attack early to prevent the Fujiwara from stealing the glory. The result of this is that by the time the players arrive at Ryo, the battle will be under way.

After the Battle at Ryo Plain, the allied clans must then attack the town itself. However, Hirozaki's strategy is to kill all the bakemono outside first, so his forces can then focus on besieging Ryo without interruption.

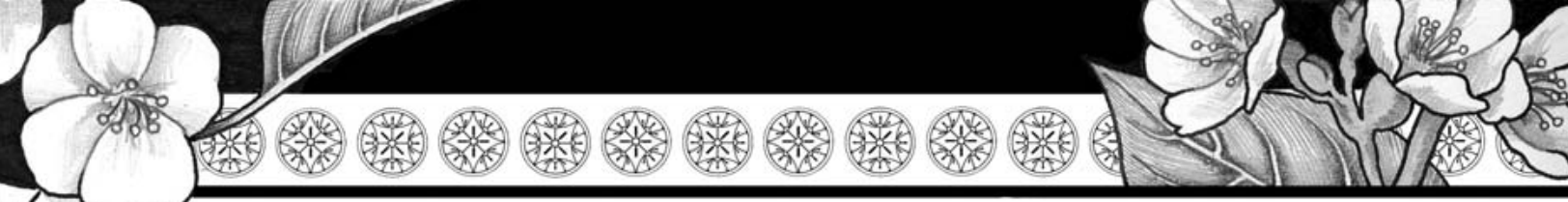
## Marching into Battle

The players will all arrive at roughly the same time or if you prefer you can have them meet up prior to their arrival at Ryo. When they arrive with their sōhei forces, read out the following:

*You crest the hills overlooking the plains outside Ryo town. You are shocked to see that the battle has already begun. War cries fill the air and the sound of steel on steel rings in your ears.*

*Thousands of bakemono fill the plains outside Ryo, while Enezga's elite forces remain heavily protected behind the town's defences. Minamoto and Taira forces have engaged the front lines and amidst the fighting you see flags of all the families that have pledged their allegiance.*

*Samurai units have broken through the bakemono lines but they are being surrounded by the enemy horde.*



*Other units charge into the fray whilst the ashigaru close in to support the mounted troops.*

*Both sides have already taken heavy losses and the clan forces are heavily outnumbered. You spur your mounts into action and lead your sōhei into battle.*

You can show the players the battle map (on page 101) so they get a good understanding of the troop deployments. The units shown on the map actually consist of several smaller units but they have been grouped together so the battle is easier to manage.

Each player must now decide where to position their men as they charge into battle. Remember, amidst the chaos and confusion of battle, the players will not be able to communicate with each other and they will not always be able to see the entire battlefield.

### Playing out the Battle

Where the players or key characters are concerned, combat works as normal but the sheer amount of characters involved in this battle makes it impossible to roll for each one. Common sense plays a big factor here, so the losses for units on each side are determined by the current circumstances.

The Bushi are superior fighters but if any unit is outnumbered by more than two to one, they will start taking heavy losses. Regardless of whether they are outnumbered or not, the Bushi will be killing a lot of bakemono. If any bakemono units are surrounded or outnumbered, the Bushi will make short work of them. Killing blows are not so important in a large scale battle; anyone who falls to the ground will likely be trampled to death.

Also try to remember that the units of both sides are not static blocks of troops, they will all be trying to manoeuvre into a better position. The battle map only shows the state of play when the players join the battle, the units will move and change as the battle progresses.

The players will have a direct involvement in the battle. For them, combat will be determined as usual. They will most likely be fighting

several opponents at a time with their sōhei fighting at their sides. The players will also need to react to the events as described below.

### Battle Events

The battle is split into events which will happen every 10 to 20 minutes at your discretion. Roll 1D8 on the table below with a cumulative +1 bonus (up to a maximum of +4). The events you roll will start off in favour of the bakemono but as the fight progresses the clans will gain the advantage.

Units on both sides will be destroyed as you determine how many fall on each side. The events that occur, and the way the players respond to them, will play an important factor in this.

Result	Event
1	The Fight Continues
2	Commander Down
3	Player Outnumbered
4	Samurai Unit Surrounded
5	The Fight Continues
6	Ashigaru Unit Surrounded
7	Sōhei Unit Surrounded
8	Bakemono Manoeuvre
9	The Fight Continues
10	Clan Unit Manoeuvre
11	The Fight Continues
12	Press the Advantage

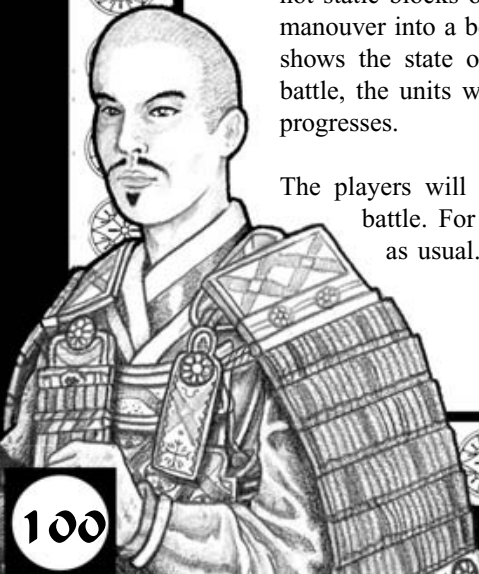
#### The Fight Continues

There is no change in the battle; both sides continue to fight as they are.

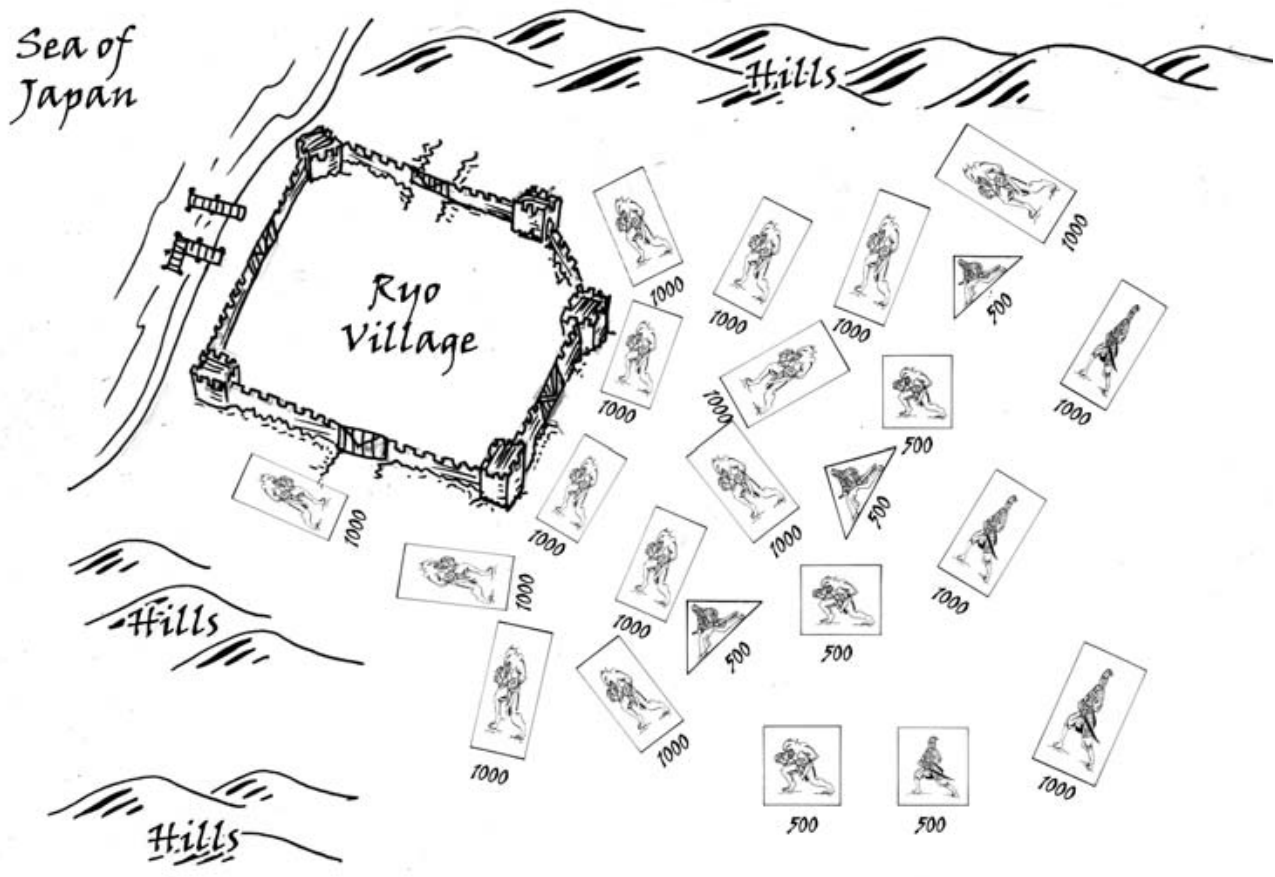
#### Commander Down

Chogen, or one of the other commanders (but not Hirozaki), have been struck from their horse. Their unit is defending them but the bakemono are focussing their efforts to kill the commander.

Any players nearby must make a Perception check to see this happening. If successful, they must decide if they can get their unit there in time to save the commander without giving ground to the bakemono.



# Ryo Battle



## Key



Bakemono unit (1000)



Bakemono unit (500)



Samurai unit (500)



Ashigaru unit (500)



Ashigaru unit (1000)



## Sōhei

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 12	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 12	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 13	Magic Points: 11	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 13	Strike Rank: +12	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 11	On: 69	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 11	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 11	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 35%, Courtesy 42%, Dodge 50%, First Aid 31%, Influence 31%, Lore (World) 36%, Perception 37%, Persistence 36%, Resilience 43%, Riding 34%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Hiragana) 61%

*Combat:* Naginata 60% 2D8  
Dai kyu 48% 2D8+1

*Armour:* None

### Player Outnumbered

One of the players is being attacked by a dai bakemono and several of his band. The sōhei are also caught up in fights and are unable to help the player. Anyone nearby can make a Perception check to spot this and intervene if possible.

If they are knocked from their horse or seriously injured, this will play out much like the Commander Down event on page 100.

### Samurai Unit Surrounded

Several bakemono units have surrounded one of the samurai units. Without assistance the samurai will soon be overwhelmed.

### Ashigaru Unit Surrounded

Several bakemono units have surrounded one of the ashigaru units. The ashigaru unit, already depleted, are outnumbered and taking heavy losses.

### Sōhei Unit Surrounded

Several bakemono units have surrounded one of the

sōhei units. The sōhei unit is heavily outnumbered and needs immediate assistance.

### Bakemono Manouever

Some of the bakemono units are manouevering to flank or otherwise attack one of the clan units. Any player nearby can intervene and prevent the bakemono before they complete the manoeuvre.

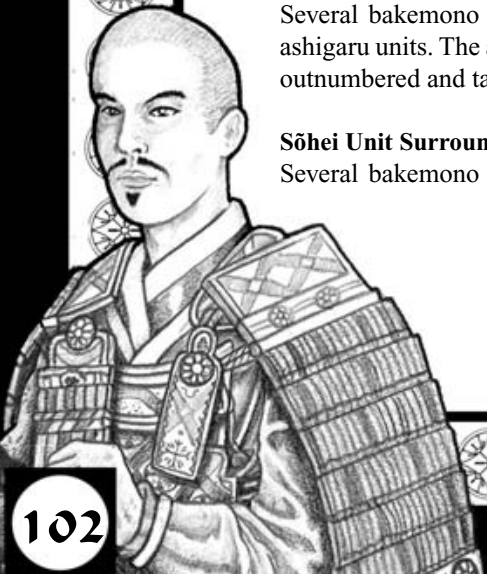
If the bakemono are not stopped, then they will surround one of the clan units as described above.

### Clan Unit Manouever

One of the clan units is moving to charge a unit of bakemono. One of the player units can join their allies and attack the flank. If successful the bakemono unit will be cut down with ease.


### Press the Advantage

The battle is turning in favour of the clans. Many of the bakemono have fallen and they are attempting to consolidate their units. Several of the player units can



## The Battle of Ryo





press the advantage and attack the bakemono before they can form ranks.

### Winning the Battle

If all goes well, the clans will be victorious. Any remaining bakemono will flee but several groups of samurai will hunt them down before they can get far. The plains are covered with bodies fallen from both sides.

Hirozaki will order the army to regroup at a safe distance from Ryo. Groups of ashigaru will scour the battlefield for survivors whilst others set up a camp in preparation for the assault on the town.

The allied clans will have lost about half their number. The number of sōhei killed will largely depend on the players' actions but they will have fewer losses than the main army. Hirozaki knows that his men must rest before they can attack the town but he is anxious to begin the assault before the Fujiwara clan arrive.

### Losing the Battle

If the players were unfortunate enough to lose the battle, they are most likely dead or seriously injured. If they did survive, they would have had to flee with what little remains of the allied clan army.

On their way back to wherever they decide to take refuge, they will see a huge army of Bushi flying the Fujiwara colours. The players have lost both the battle and the war, resulting in a loss of 2D4+2 On. Their shame will be unbearable and committing seppuku is something that they should seriously consider.

### The Siege of Ryo

Hirozaki will let his men rest for the night so that they are fresh for the attack on Ryo. Although there are far less bakemono inside the town, they are well defended and breaching the fortifications will be difficult.

The players have become well respected and honoured Bushi, now commanders in their own right. Hirozaki will call a meeting of his most trusted advisors, generals and of course, the players. With approximately 2,000

ashigaru and less than 1,000 samurai remaining, the group must discuss the best strategy for winning back the town.

Allow the players to discuss and plan possible attack strategies. If they get stuck, Hirozaki and other generals will make the following suggestions:

- ♣ Burning the fortifications.
- ♣ Breaking down the gates or sections of the wall.
- ♣ Full scale assault where the Bushi attempt to get over the walls with ladders and other equipment.
- ♣ Dig under the fortifications.

The discussions will last most of the day and Hirozaki will take all suggestions under advisement.

### The Players' Mission

Hirozaki will have a special task for the players. They will not be directly involved in this battle as they have a more important mission. Read out the following:

*As the generals and advisors leave Hirozaki's command tent, he asks you to remain behind.*

*'You performed admirably today and you are all able commanders. However, I will be assigning new commanders to the sōhei units, as I have a special task for you in the battle to come.'*

*Once the defences are breached, your group will go through and search the town for Enezga. Once their leader is killed, the bakemono morale will be crushed, especially after the losses they suffered today.*

*I will assign a small support unit to aid you in this but the key is to avoid conflict and strike at their heart.'*

### The Siege: Day One

The next morning, the players will watch as the ashigaru make the first assault on the town. The samurai stay back as the soldiers attempt to breach the defences. Whichever strategy was decided upon will be put into action but the first attempt will fail, with many ashigaru lying dead at the walls.





The battle goes on for hours and during the afternoon you see an army approaching in the distance. They are flying the flags of the Fujiwara clan. As the army gets closer, Hirozaki rides out with several units of sōhei. A short while later, Hirozaki returns but the sōhei remain in position, seemingly preventing the Fujiwara from advancing further.

The situation is tense as the sōhei holding off the Fujiwara are really needed in the fight at Ryo. However, the players should see the wisdom in Hirozaki's decision to use them as he has. The Fujiwara might fight the Bushi of the Minamoto and Taira clans but they will think twice before declaring war against the temples.

After several more hours of failed attempts to breach Ryo, Hirozaki will recall his forces. Although they were unsuccessful in breaking through, the Bushi now know where the weak points are and Hirozaki will quiz many of them to refine his attack strategy.

The players spend another long night camped on the plains. Fires are lit and the Bushi spend the night preparing for another day of fighting and bloodshed.

The sōhei units guarding the Fujiwara change

with those who are rested and the Fujiwara army makes camp for the night.

### The Siege: Day Two

With a better idea of how to break through the fortifications, Hirozaki has formed a new strategy. Read out the following:

*As dawn comes, Hirozaki commands the entire army to attack. With the sun behind them, the forces of the Minamoto, Taira and the sōhei charge toward the town of Ryo. You can see several attempts to breach the walls and gates but they do not go well. Hirozaki rides over to you with a small group of samurai.*

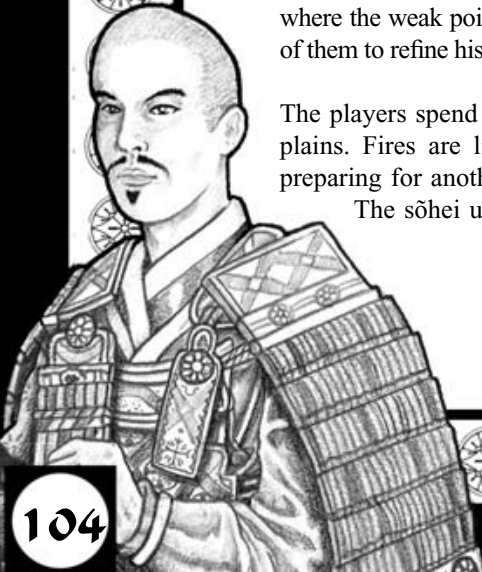
*'These samurai are under orders to assist you in your mission. Prepare to breach the north tower.'*

*As soon as he says this, you see a group of mounted Bushi ride away from the tower and come to a sudden stop. You hear a loud crack and the horses surge forward again and the tower collapses behind them. Hirozaki simply nods at you, a hint of smile showing on his face.*

The party must now ride into the breach and find Enezga. Many of the Bushi have already poured through the gap where the tower fell. The bakemono are holding most of them off but the players can get through without too much opposition.


Each party member must make a Riding check to safely traverse the rubble. If they fail they will come to a stop and be attacked by bakemono. Another Riding check must be made once the bakemono have been dealt with. If anyone fumbles their Riding check, their horse will break its leg on the uneven footing and fall to the ground.

As the players break through, they must ride with speed through the town before too many bakemono can stand in their way. At the end of the main street, the party will see the broken remains of the shrine. Enezga has built a throne in its place and sits atop it commanding his men.



## The Battle of Ryo





As he sees the players approaching, Enezga stands and draws his sword. He is guarded by several bands of bakemono and beckons the party to him.

### Fighting Enezga

Enezga will take on several of the party at once, while his bakemono fight the rest. The samurai support force will protect the players and clear a path to Enezga. Anyone wielding a bow will be the primary targets of Enezga and the bakemono and the fight will soon be a melee battle.

To give the players an indication of the power of Enezga's sword, allow him to strike one of the samurai first so the party can see how devastating this weapon really is. The magical resistance bonus from the Elemental Blades will apply to the powers of the Sword of Seven Cuts, so anyone wielding one of these swords will stand a much better chance of defeating Enezga.

If the fight becomes too easy for the party, another group of bakemono will join the fight but once Enezga is slain they will flee as they see their leader lying dead on the ground.

### Aftermath

Once Enezga has been killed, word will soon spread and the bakemono will begin to run away. As they flee the battle, more Bushi will come through the breach and the battle will soon be over.

The Bushi will cheer as the day is won. The Fujiwara, seeing the allied clans' victory will march off into the distance. As the players recover from the fight, Hirozaki will approach them:

*'The day is won. The bakemono have been defeated and the Minamoto and Taira clans will gain much influence and standing from what has been accomplished here today.'*

*You are truly men of courage and honour. Your deeds will be talked of throughout the Imperial Court and your names will be spoken with reverence and pride.'*

*Hirozaki smiles graciously and leaves you to celebrate your honour and victory.*

The Minamoto and Taira forces now occupy the town of Ryo. Bodies are cleared and the wounded are taken care of. The few remaining villagers in Ryo are freed and although happy that their ordeal is over, they are also saddened at the loss of so many friends and family. The sōhei, their task complete, head back to the temples.

### Celebrations

Once the town is habitable, the Bushi relax and celebrate the victory that they were all part of. The villagers join in the festivities as feasts are prepared and drink shared amongst the men.

As the players enjoy the celebrations, many people come up to them to honour the many deeds accomplished by the party. The players are now heroes of Japan and who knows what adventures await them down the road...

### Rewards

The rewards for completing this chapter are as follows:

Achievement	Reward
Completing the chapter	1 improvement roll
Reconciling the Sects	1 Hero Point
Winning the Battle at Ryo Plain	1 On 1 improvement roll
Defeating Enezga	3 On 1 Hero Point
Other roleplaying bonus/ penalty	GM determined

# APPENDIX 1: RECURRING CHARACTERS

## Named Characters

### Enezga

The bakemono leader is much bigger than most of his kind. The Sword of Seven Cuts is always strapped to his back and he speaks in a deep guttural voice.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	15	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-4
CON	12	Damage Bonus:	+1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-3
DEX	14	Movement:	3m	R. Arm (13-15)	-3
SIZ	15	Strike Rank:	+15	Chest (10-12)	2/6
INT	16	—	—	Abdomen (07-09)	2/5
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-4
CHA	6	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-4

*Traits:* Camouflage, Night Sight

*Skills:* Athletics 40%, Dodge 50%, Perception 45%, Resilience 35%, Stealth 75%

*Combat:* Katana 58% 1D10+2+1D2

*Armour:* Broken D -Maru (Penalties have been factored into above skills)

*Magic Items:* Sword of Seven Cuts (see below)





### Sword of Seven Cuts

This powerful sword is a well crafted but simple looking katana. It can be wielded one or two handed and deals 1D10+1 or 1D10+2 damage respectively. The sword can also strike spirits and other magical creatures.

The Sword of Seven Cuts is so named as whenever it inflicts damage, it reduces each of the target's seven characteristics by one. This effect is cumulative and lasts for seven minutes. Treat this as if the Diminish sorcery spell has been cast for each characteristic but only one Resilience roll is made for all seven effects with a -25% penalty.

The sword also inflicts 1 additional point of damage to each location and armour cannot protect against this. A separate Resilience roll is made against this effect, again, with a -25% penalty.

This legendary item was created by the mad sorcerer Tokisada over 200 years ago. The sword was forged to avenge the death of his family but in his madness, Tokisada unleashed his fury on the local kami. This terrible act brought so much dishonour to him and his clan that he exiled himself. Tokisada and the Sword of Seven Cuts faded into myth, until Sushigawa discovered it during his time on the island of Hokkaido.



### Minamoto no Hirozaki

Hirozaki has a muscular build and stands over six feet tall. His goatee beard gives him a serious look and he always speaks in a loud commanding voice.

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 16	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	5/7
CON 16	Damage Bonus: +1D4	L. Arm (16-18)	2/6
DEX 18	Magic Points: 11	R. Arm (13-15)	2/6
SIZ 17	Strike Rank: +15	Chest (10-12)	5/9
INT 12	On: 89	Abdomen (07-09)	5/8
POW 11	—	L. Leg (04-06)	2/7
CHA 14	—	R. Leg (01-03)	2/7

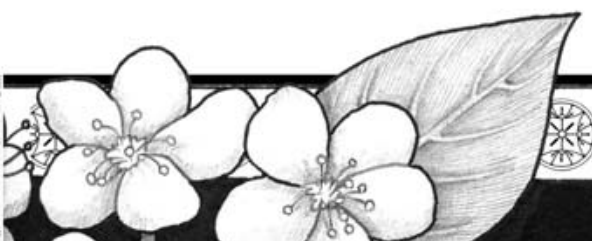
*Basic Skills:* Acrobatics 22%, Athletics 33%, Courtesy 46%, Dodge 30%, Influence 39%, Perception 44%, Persistence 31%, Resilience 37%, Riding 57%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 62%, Oratory 65%

*Combat:* Katana 63% 1D10+1+1D4  
 Dai kyu 57% 2D8+1+1D4  
 Yabusame 77% 2D8+1+1D4

*Armour:* Full Yoroi suit (Penalties have been factored into above skills)

*Ki Abilities:* Born Leader



## Minamoto Kanamuchi

Kanamuchi is a stern man, well built and has a long braided pony tail. His manner is abrupt and to the point, he does not like time wasters or procrastination.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	16	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON	14	Damage Bonus:	+1D4	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX	13	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ	16	Strike Rank:	+12	Chest (10-12)	-/8
INT	12	On:	72	Abdomen (07-09)	-/7
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/6
CHA	14	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/6

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 39%, Courtesy 36%, Dodge 32%, Influence 34%, Lore (World) 37%, Perception 49%, Persistence 32%, Resilience 31%, Riding 35%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Katakana) 62%, Shiphandling 62%

*Combat:* Katana 49% 1D10+1+1D4

Dai kyu 43% 2D8+1+1D4

*Armour:* None



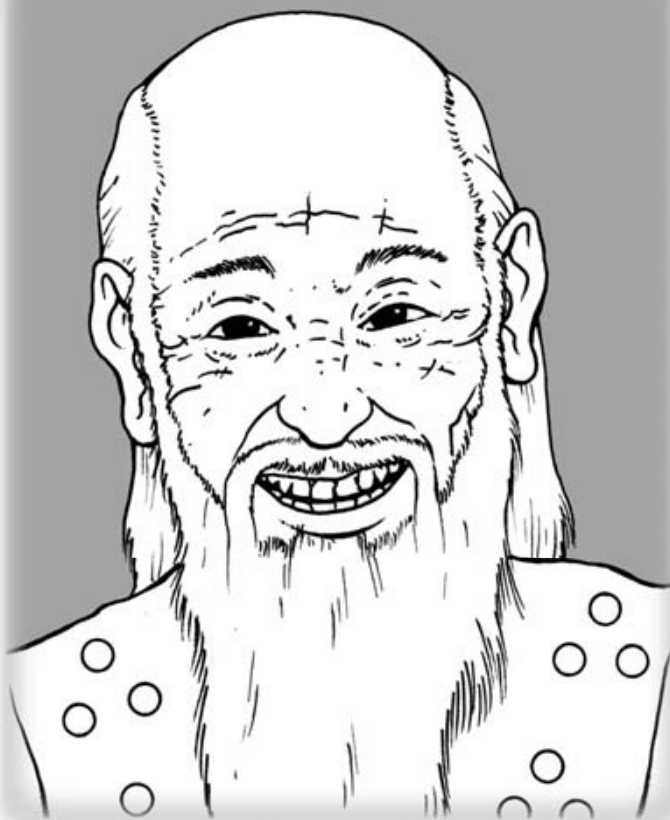
## Natsui

Natsui is an old man with white hair and a long beard. He belongs to the Shingo sect and what he lacks in size he makes up for in compassion.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	12	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20)	-5
CON	12	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	-4
DEX	11	Magic Points:	18	R. Arm (13-15)	-4
SIZ	10	Strike Rank:	+13	Chest (10-12)	-7
INT	16	On:	92	Abdomen (07-09)	-6
POW	18	Purity:	73	L. Leg (04-06)	-5
CHA	15	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-5

*Basic Skills:* Courtesy 66%, Influence 45%, Lore (World) 61%, Perception 59%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 30%, Riding 39%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 86%, Lore (Tendai Theology) 66%, Meditation 74%



## Sushigawa

Sushigawa is a small man dressed in a finely tailored kimono. He is cold, calculating and very patient. He places no value on life except his own and will use anyone or anything to achieve his goals.

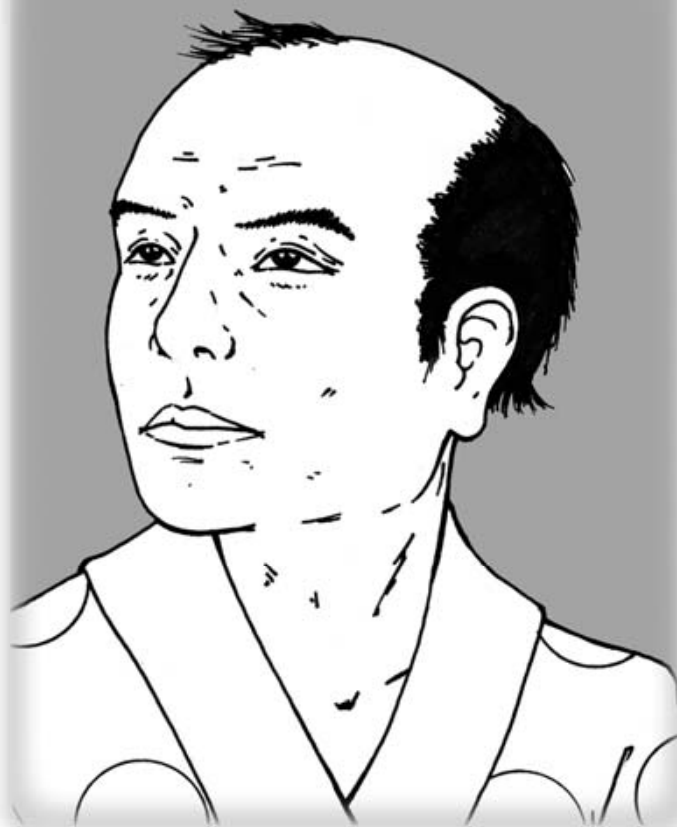
Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	13	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON	12	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX	15	Magic Points:	20	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ	10	Strike Rank:	+16	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT	18	On:	23	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW	20	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA	16	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Courtesy 34%, Dodge 45%, Lore (World) 23%, Perception 48%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 37%, Riding 35%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Kanji) 68%, Enchanting 60%, Manipulation (Combine) 58%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 58%, Manipulation (Targets) 58%

*Spells:* Aura of Lightning 68%, Bolts of Agony 58%, Damage Resistance 68%, Holdfast 58%

*Magic Items:* Sushigawa has a golden amulet with Power Enhancer Enchantment (POW 1) and Spell Enhancer Enchantment (POW 2)



## Unnamed Characters

### Ainu Captain

Some mercenary groups will have an experienced captain to lead them.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	13	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-6
CON	14	Damage Bonus:	+1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-5
DEX	15	Magic Points:	10	R. Arm (13-15)	-5
SIZ	13	Strike Rank:	+14	Chest (10-12)	2/8
INT	13	—	—	Abdomen (07-09)	2/7
POW	10	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	2/6
CHA	12	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	1/6
<i>Basic Skills:</i> Athletics 42%, Dodge 42%, Influence 42%, Perception 43%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 50%					
<i>Advanced Skills:</i> Shiphandling 46%					
<i>Combat:</i> Scimitar 59% 1D6+1+1D2					
Shortbow 51% 1D8+1D2					
<i>Armour:</i> Heavy leather hauberk and leather treads (Penalties factored into above skills)					

### Ainu Soldiers

The soldiers make up the bulk of the Ainu forces.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	13	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20)	-5
CON	13	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	1/4
DEX	12	Magic Points:	10	R. Arm (13-15)	1/4
SIZ	12	Strike Rank:	+11	Chest (10-12)	1/7
INT	11	—	—	Abdomen (07-09)	1/6
POW	10	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	1/5
CHA	12	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	1/5
<i>Basic Skills:</i> Athletics 26%, Boating 32%, Dodge 28%, Perception 31%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 35%					
<i>Advanced Skills:</i> Shiphandling 31%					
<i>Combat:</i> Scimitar 41% 1D6+1					
Shortbow 41% 1D8					
<i>Armour:</i> Leather shirt and treads (Penalties factored into above skills)					



## Ainu Warriors

These are the elite fighters who are usually assigned to guard or patrol duty.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	13	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	2/6
CON	14	Damage Bonus:	+1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	1/5
DEX	14	Magic Points:	10	R. Arm (13-15)	1/5
SIZ	13	Strike Rank:	+13	Chest (10-12)	1/8
INT	13	—	—	Abdomen (07-09)	1/7
POW	10	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	1/6
CHA	12	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	1/6

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 34%, Boating 27%, Dodge 34%, Perception 43%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 45%  
*Advanced Skills:* Shiphandling 33%  
*Combat:* Scimitar 51% 1D6+1+1D2  
 Shortbow 51% 1D8+1D2  
*Armour:* Heavy leather cap, leather shirt and trews (Penalties factored into above skills)

## Ashigaru

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	12	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON	12	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX	13	Magic Points:	10	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ	13	Strike Rank:	+11	Chest (10-12)	3/7
INT	10	On:	47	Abdomen (07-09)	3/6
POW	10	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA	10	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 29%, Courtesy 35%, Dodge 34%, Influence 30%, Lore (World) 30%, Perception 35%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 37%  
*Combat:* Katana 50% 1D10+1  
 Dai kyu 43% 2D8+1  
*Armour:* D -Maru (Penalties have been factored into above skills)



## Bakemono

Most bakemono belong to a band led by a dai bakemono. A band can vary in size but most have anywhere between five and 20.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	9	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20)	-4
CON	9	Damage Bonus:	-1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-3
DEX	11	Strike Rank:	+11	R. Arm (13-15)	-3
SIZ	9	Movement:	3m	Chest (10-12)	-6
INT	11	—	—	Abdomen (07-09)	-5
POW	10	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-4
CHA	4	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-4
<i>Traits:</i> Camouflage, Night Sight					
<i>Skills:</i> Athletics 50%, Dodge 50%, Perception 35%, Resilience 35%, Stealth 85%					
<i>Combat:</i> Yari 45%      1D8-1D2					
Han kyu 50%      1D8-1D2					
<i>Armour:</i> None					
Full details of the bakemono can be found in <i>Land of the Samurai</i> page 91					

## Dai Bakemono

The dai bakemono are the leaders of the bakemono bands.

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	12	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20)	-5
CON	10	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	-4
DEX	12	Strike Rank:	+11	R. Arm (13-15)	-4
SIZ	12	Movement:	3m	Chest (10-12)	-7
INT	12	—	—	Abdomen (07-09)	-6
POW	10	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-5
CHA	5	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-5
<i>Traits:</i> Camouflage, Night Sight					
<i>Skills:</i> Athletics 55%, Dodge 50%, Perception 40%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 85%					
<i>Combat:</i> Katana 60%      1D10+1					
<i>Armour:</i> Dai bakemono often wear scraps of armour. When a location is hit, roll 1D4-2 to determine how much armour that location has (minimum of 0).					
Full details of the dai bakemono can be found in <i>Land of the Samurai</i> page 91					

## Ronin

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	13	Combat Actions:	2	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON	13	Damage Bonus:	0	L. Arm (16-18)	2/4
DEX	12	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15)	2/4
SIZ	12	Strike Rank:	+12	Chest (10-12)	5/7
INT	12	On:	56	Abdomen (07-09)	5/6
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	2/5
CHA	12	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	2/5

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 35%, Courtesy 44%, Dodge 30%, Influence 37%, Perception 39%, Persistence 32%, Resilience 35%, Riding 44%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Katakana) 62%, Lore (Iwami province) 32%

*Combat:* Katana 55% 1D10+1  
Dai kyu 47% 2D8+1

*Armour:* Yoroi suit (Penalties have been factored into above skills)

## Samurai

Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	14	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	5/6
CON	14	Damage Bonus:	+1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	2/5
DEX	15	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15)	2/5
SIZ	14	Strike Rank:	+13	Chest (10-12)	5/8
INT	12	On:	79	Abdomen (07-09)	5/7
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	2/6
CHA	12	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	2/6

*Basic Skills:* Acrobatics 25%, Athletics 39%, Courtesy 64%, Dodge 41%, Influence 37%, Perception 44%, Persistence 32%, Resilience 36%, Riding 45%

*Combat:* Katana 59% 1D10+1+1D2  
Dai kyu 45% 2D8+1+1D2  
Yabusame 65% 2D8+1+1D2

*Armour:* Full Yoroi suit (Penalties have been factored into above skills)

## Sui Tatsu Crew

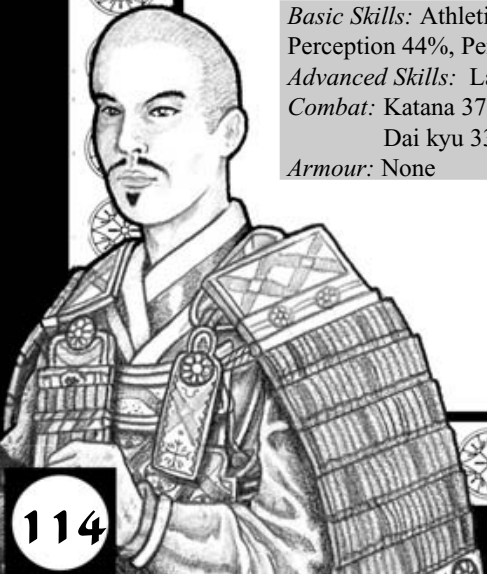
Characteristics		Special Rules		Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR	14	Combat Actions:	3	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON	14	Damage Bonus:	+1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX	13	Magic Points:	12	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ	13	Strike Rank:	+12	Chest (10-12)	-/8
INT	12	On:	48	Abdomen (07-09)	-/7
POW	12	—	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/6
CHA	12	—	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/6

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 37%, Courtesy 34%, Dodge 25%, Evaluate 32%, Influence 32%, Lore (World) 27%, Perception 44%, Persistence 22%, Resilience 31%, Riding 25%

*Advanced Skills:* Language (Katakana) 62%, Shiphandling 42%

*Combat:* Katana 37% 1D10+1+1D2  
Dai kyu 33% 2D8+1+1D2

*Armour:* None





# APPENDIX 11: RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

As the players travel the lands and seas around Japan, they will encounter many things. A number of random encounters are presented here that you can use as required to keep the players on their toes. Some encounters are best suited to certain regions and these will be noted in the description.

## Encounters in Friendly Territory

Please note that these encounters are not suitable for use in The Blade of Wind chapter, a special set of encounters are detailed in that chapter for travelling across the island of Hokkaido.

Pick or roll on the following table as many times as required. Details of each encounter are listed below.

1D10 Roll	Encounter
1-2	Bakemono
3	Bandits
4	Bear Attack
5	Captives
6	Patrol
7	Shrine Massacre
8	Storm
9	Travellers
0	Wounded Traveller

### Bakemono

This encounter should be restricted to Iwami province and surrounding areas. The players come across a band of bakemono pulling a cart of supplies. On seeing the party, the bakemono will rush to attack. Alternatively, you can have the bakemono hiding in nearby trees and copses, to ambush the party as they pass.

### Bandits

The number of bandits in this region has increased dramatically since the war. With the samurai engaged

with the bakemono, the bandits have seized the opportunity to steal from those left unprotected. Occasionally, they will attack small groups of soldiers for their weapons and armour.

There are several ways that the players can encounter the bandits:

- ✧ The bandits ambush the party.
- ✧ The bandits are in the process of robbing some travellers or local farmers.
- ✧ The bandits have just robbed and/or killed some local farmers or travellers and are collecting their loot.

If the players search the bandit's bodies, they will find small amounts of money but little else of interest or value. If the party saved anyone from the bandits, the survivors will thank the players and ask for their protection to get to their destination such as a nearby town.

### Bear Attack

The black bear is most commonly found in or near the mountains but they are sometimes encountered in lowland areas. Black bears are solitary creatures and tend to be very aggressive toward humans, attacking on sight.

The party can make a Perception check to see if they spot any bear tracks in the area. If they are successful they will be alert to its presence and get a +10% bonus to their Perception check when opposing the bear's Stealth. If the bear is successful with its Stealth check then it will gain surprise when attacking the party.

### Captives

This encounter should be restricted to Iwami province only. The players pass near a small village or farm. Several buildings can be seen between some rice paddies and one of the buildings is on fire. If the players



## Bandits

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 13	Combat Actions: 3	Head (19-20)	-/5
CON 13	Damage Bonus: 0	L. Arm (16-18)	-/4
DEX 13	Magic Points: 10	R. Arm (13-15)	-/4
SIZ 12	Strike Rank: +12	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 12	On: 26	Abdomen (07-09)	-/6
POW 12	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/5
CHA 12	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/5

*Basic Skills:* Athletics 41%, Courtesy 27%, Dodge 36%, Influence 25%, Perception 42%, Persistence 20%, Resilience 33%, Riding 43%, Stealth 41%

*Combat:* Katana 46% 1D10+1

*Armour:* None

## Black Bear

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 20	Combat Actions: 3	Head (17-20)	3/7
CON 13	Damage Bonus: +1D6	L. Front Leg (14-16)	3/6
DEX 13	Strike Rank: +9	R. Front Leg (11-13)	3/6
SIZ 20	Movement: 6m	Chest (8-10)	3/9
INT 5	—	Hindquarters (05-07)	3/8
POW 10	—	L. Rear Leg (03-04)	3/7
CHA 5	—	R. Rear Leg (01-02)	3/7

*Skills:* Athletics 35%, Perception 50%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 25%, Survival 60%, Tracking 25%

*Combat:* Bite 45% 1D8+1D6  
Claw 55% 1D6+1D6

*Armour:* Tough Hide (no skill penalty)

investigate they will discover a band of bakemono terrorising the villagers.

A small number of bakemono are dealing with the people, whilst the rest of the band search the buildings for the supplies and load them onto a small cart that they pull behind them. The players will hopefully deduce that the bakemono are raiding unprotected farms and villages to collect food (and weapons if available) to supply Enezga's growing army.

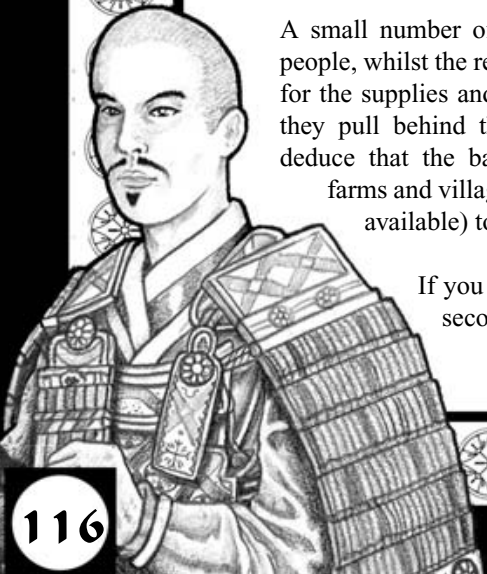
If you wish, you can do this encounter a second time but try to vary it slightly,

such as not having a fire but seeing the people being rounded up or attacked.

## Patrol

The party meets a patrol of samurai and ashigaru. The patrolling clan will depend on the party's location. If they are near Iwami province then it will most likely be Minamoto or Taira patrolling the roads or marching to a garrison.

If the party is close to the war zone, the patrol commander will ask the players their destination and orders to make





## Gaki

Characteristics	Special Rules	Hit Locations	AP/HP
STR 9	Combat Actions: 2	Head (19-20)	-/6
CON 11	Damage Bonus: +1D2	L. Arm (16-18)	-/5
DEX 11	Strike Rank: +11	R. Arm (13-15)	-/5
SIZ 18	Movement: 3m	Chest (10-12)	-/7
INT 11	—	Abdomen (07-09)	-/8
POW 10	—	L. Leg (04-06)	-/6
CHA 4	—	R. Leg (01-03)	-/6

*Traits:* Night Sight

*Skills:* Dodge 30%, Perception 35%, Persistence 115%, Resilience 90%

*Combat:* Scratch 55% 1D8+1D2

*Armour:* Gaki sustain half damage from normal weapons, but any weapon blessed by a Buddhist priest will inflict full damage

Full details of the Gaki can be found in *Land of the Samurai* page 92

sure the players are where they are meant to be and not a rival clan here to cause problems.

### Shrine Massacre

The party discover a desecrated Jinja (Shinto shrine) with two bloodied corpses nearby. Any religious characters will not want to leave the shrine or the bodies in this state. If the players decide to attend to this, a Gaki will appear from behind the shrine and attack them.

### Storm

A devastating storm sweeps the province. Powerful winds and torrential rains ravage the region. The players will be soaked through in a matter of seconds. They must find somewhere safe and dry to wait out the storm, which lasts for 1D4 hours.

The party will also be subjected to intense winds that blow away anything that is not surely fastened down. Each party member must make a Brute Force Athletics test to stay on their feet. Anyone who fails will be blown across the ground until they hit something, taking 1D6 damage to a random location.

### Travellers

This can be a lone traveller or a small group. However, lone travellers are unlikely to walk the roads of

Iwami province unless they are capable fighters. The travellers can be anything from a group of ronin, to a lone farmer, merchant or even a diplomat.

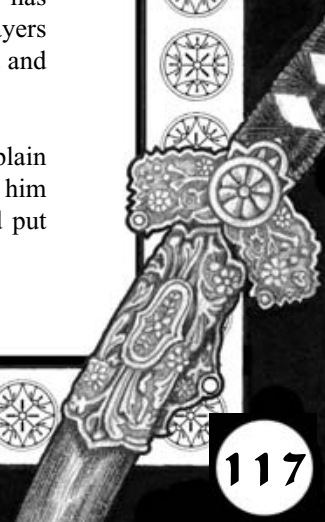
If the players stop to converse with the travellers, they can find out any news from where they have come from. If the man is a merchant, he will try to sell his wares. Anyone else (especially anyone who outranks the party) may ask the players to escort them to their destination, refusal of which could result in a loss of On.

If the players encounter a group of ronin, they may be hostilities depending on the circumstances

### Wounded Traveller

This encounter should be restricted to Iwami province and surrounding areas. The party discover a wounded traveller by the roadside. He is barely conscious and if left unattended he will almost certainly die. If they wish to save him, the players must tend to his wounds and give him some water. When the traveller has regained some of his strength, he will ask the players to take him to a nearby temple where he can rest and recover from his injuries.

If the players ask him what happened, he will explain that a band of bakemono attacked him and left him here to die. They took all of his belongings and put



them on a cart that they dragged off toward the west (they were taking supplies to the army outside Ryo).

## Encounters in Enemy Territory

When the party is travelling through enemy territory in Iwami province, use the encounters presented here. Every few hours of game time, make a roll on the Encounter table to see if the players encounter the enemy. Every few hours they move deeper into enemy territory, add +1 to the dice roll up to a maximum of +4.

Bakemono bands are always led by a dai bakemono. Most Ainu encountered will use the Ainu Warrior statistics and will be lead by an Ainu Captain. Statistics for all of these can be found in Appendix I.

1D10 Roll	Encounter
1-5	Safe
6	Bakemono ambush
7	Ainu patrol
8	Bakemono patrol
9	Ainu camp
10	Bakemono camp

### Ambush

To help prevent enemy incursions, Enezga has ordered many bakemono bands to hide out and ambush any small forces. Most of these tend to be on his borders but a few have also been set up further inside Enezga's territories.

These ambush groups tend to be small having 1D6+4 bakemono (including the dai bakemono).

### Camps

The players must make a Perception check to see the camp before they are spotted by the bakemono or Ainu occupying it. Bakemono camps are more difficult to see and have a -20% penalty to the Perception check.

If the players spot the camp in time they can go around it. If everyone in the party fails their

Perception check then the camp will be alerted and will attack. A camp will usually consist of 1D10+5 people.

### Patrols

There is a 40% chance that the players will be within the patrol's line of sight. If they are, it means that the patrol is heading in the party's general direction. Perception rolls must be made to detect the patrol and move out of sight before the players are spotted.

If successful then the players must find somewhere to hide or prepare to fight the incoming patrol. Remember that the bakemono will usually be near mountains, hills and trees, whilst the Ainu are more likely to be on flatter ground. If the party fail their Perception checks then the patrol will attack them anyway. Patrols vary in size with 3D6 people.

If the patrol is heading away from the party, the players have the option of a surprise attack from behind.

## Encounters at Sea

Life at sea is not usually as eventful or dangerous as travelling on land. However, there are a few encounters that you can pick or roll from the table below:

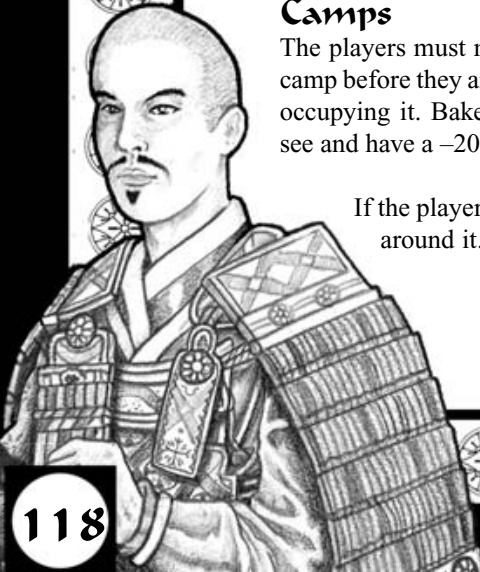
1D6 Roll	Encounter
1-2	Plain Sailing
3	Good Weather
4	Man Overboard
5	Storm
6	Stowaway

### Plain Sailing

Nothing untoward happens and the ship continues on its course without interruption or delay.

### Good Weather

The sun is out, the sky is clear and the wind is good. The ship will be travelling at a fast rate, which will reduce the total journey time by 1D10 hours.





## Man Overboard

One of the party or crew falls overboard. This could be the result of a storm or an accident such as a frayed rope or damaged railing. Large ships such as this one cannot turn around quickly or easily meaning that the victim will either drown or be carried away by the winds and currents.

One method of saving the person is to throw a rope out to them. This must be done quickly before the ship gains too much distance. Whoever throws the rope must make a Throwing check to make sure that the rope lands near the target. The recipient must then make an Athletics check to swim over and grab the rope. They can have several attempts at this before the distance becomes too great.

If the above method fails, a boat can be lowered into the water with a few crew members who can row out to the person at sea. The boat can either be tied to a rope (if the distance is not too great), row to shore (if close enough) or hope the ship can turn around to pick them up (requiring several successful Shiphandling checks from the captain). If anyone falls overboard during a storm, using the boat is not an option as it would not endure the storm.

## Storm

A devastating storm sweeps across the ocean, heading towards the mainland. Anyone on the deck will be soaked through in a matter of seconds. The captain will

give orders to trim the sails and secure the hatches. Any non-essential personnel will be ordered below decks.

Everyone on the deck who has not tied themselves down must make a Brute Force Athletics test to stay on their feet. Anyone who fails will be blown across the deck and must make an Athletics check to grab hold of something. If they fail to grab on, they will be blown overboard as detailed above. Anyone nearby who has secured themselves can try to grab the victim with an Athletics check.

Anyone below deck who is not used to the sea must make a Resilience check or they will suffer from sea sickness. The storm will last for 1D4 hours and the ship will be blown off course, delaying them by the same amount of time.

## Stowaway

One of the players will discover a stowaway hiding in the hold or one of the dinghies. The stowaway will be of the heimin class, most likely a peddler or thief. They will either be running away from something or trying to make a new life wherever the ship takes them.

This is also a good opportunity for a new player or NPC to join the party if needed. They might have a good reason for being on board the ship or they might be convincing enough to join the party. The players will ultimately decide the fate of the stowaway but the captain will also have his say.



# INDEX

- Ainu 11  
Ainu Captain 111  
Ainu Soldiers 111  
Ainu Warriors 112  
Akkorokamui 75, 77  
Asherine 76  
Ashigaru 2, 112  
Ataro 26  
Azuramo 29  
Bakemono 113, 115  
Bandits 115, 116  
Battle of Ryo 7  
Benzo 57  
Black Bear 116  
Blades of Earth & Fire 6, 62  
Blade of Earth 73  
Blade of Fire 73  
Blade of Heaven 46, 47  
Blade of Water 49, 53, 60  
Blade of Wind 7, 74, 83  
Brown Bear 79  
Caste 4  
Class 4  
Code of Conduct 21  
Conflicts of Faith 6  
Dai Bakemono 113  
Detour 12  
Dirty Tactics 40  
Eizo 27  
Enezga 5, 106  
Enezga's Gambit 87  
Fusaki Norimoto 38  
Gaki 117  
Hirozaki 20, 30, 48  
Intrigue in Miyako 6  
Intruders 27  
Katsu no Kiyoshi 22  
Kiyoshi 24  
Kotaro 15  
Legend of the Elemental Blades 45  
Message 13  
Minamoto Arimoro 17  
Minamoto Chogen 10  
Minamoto Kanamuchi 4, 108  
Minamoto no Hirozaki 4, 107  
Miyako 23, 26  
Mukade 54, 56  
Natsui 4, 42, 109  
Ninja 90  
Ninja Agent 97  
Oguramo 29  
Oni 67  
Road to Miyako 21  
Rokuro-kubi 68  
Ronin 114  
Ryo 5, 26  
Samurai 2, 114  
Sōhei 2, 102  
Sorcerer 7, 86  
Stone of Prosperity 54  
Sui Tatsu 35  
Sui Tatsu Crew 114  
Summoner 72  
Sushigawa 4, 110  
Sushigawa's Hold 43  
Sword of Seven Cuts 107  
The Blade of Water 6  
Travellers 80  
Unnan 14, 26  
Villagers 59  
Weaponsmiths 59  
Wolf 81  
Yamabushi 2  
Yamasaki Eizo 25  
Yayu 37



# RuneQuest

## *Price of Honour*

### **Japan, 900 A.D.**

Emperor Ichijō rules Japan and the Imperial Court is dominated by the Fujiwara clan. The power base they have slowly built over the last two centuries is now being threatened by two rival clans, the Minamoto and the Taira. These two ambitious clans have gained much standing in the Imperial Court and their influence continues to grow.

In the midst of this political conflict the bakemono Lord, Enezga, has seized several territories in the Iwami province. Both Minamoto and Taira have lost territories and resources to this invasion and in an unexpected move, they have formed an alliance to drive Enezga's forces from their lands.

The ranks of Enezga's army have grown at an astonishing rate and to make matters worse, the sorcerer Sushigawa has also joined with Enezga. Sushigawa has summoned the fabled Sword of Seven Cuts which Enezga has used to slay local kami and defile Buddhist temples.

Although their losses have been great, if they defeat Enezga then both Minamoto and Taira will gain significant standing and influence in the Imperial Court for such a victory. Minamoto and Taira now face a war on two fronts, for not only must they defeat the invading army in Iwami province, but they also play a deadly game of politics in the Imperial Court against the Fujiwara clan.



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