

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY 75p

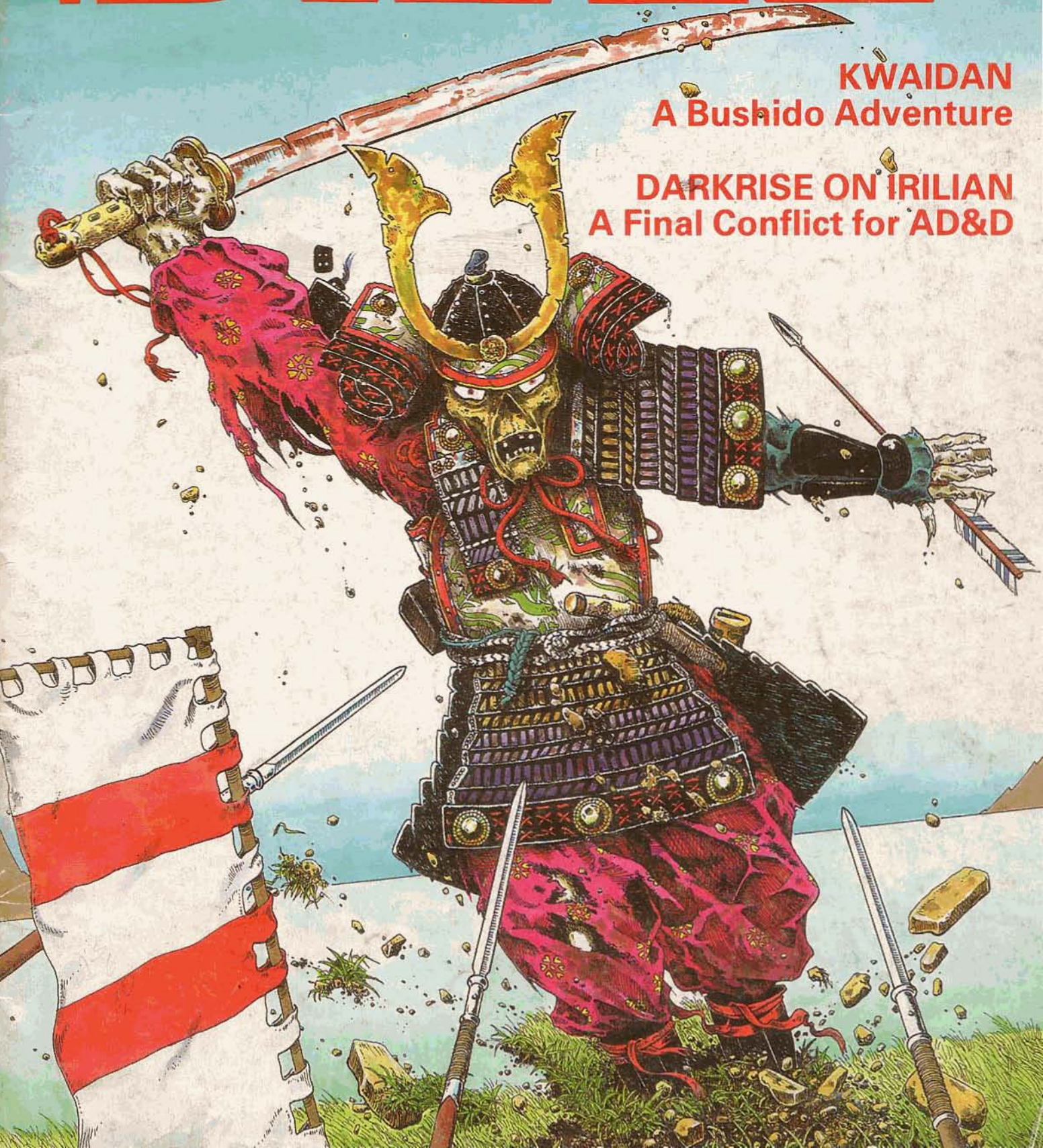
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KWAIDAN
A Bushido Adventure

DARKRISE ON IRILIAN
A Final Conflict for AD&D





The Monastery and Village of Asamimura



KWAIDAN

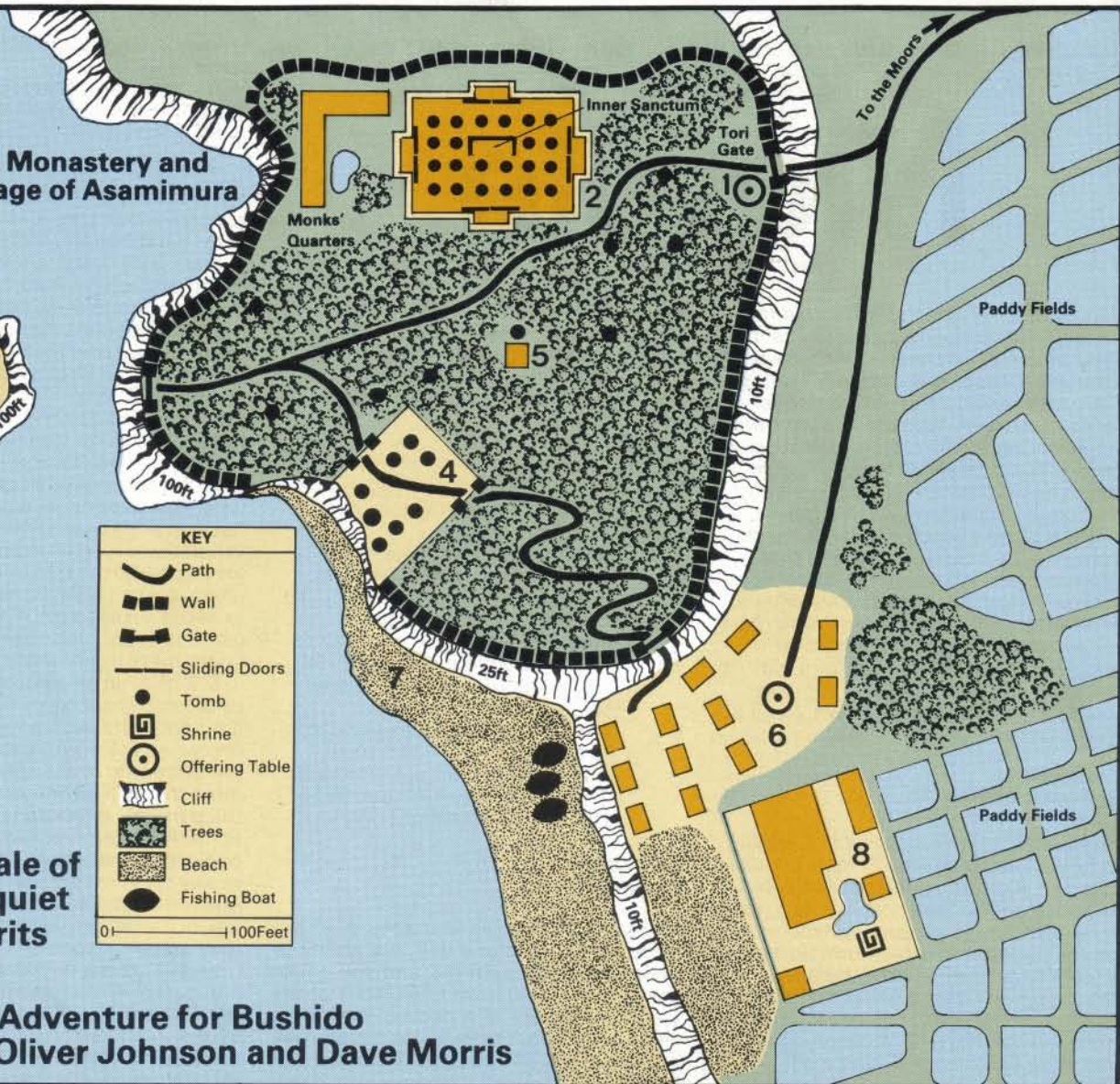
A Tale of Unquiet Spirits

An Adventure for Bushido by Oliver Johnson and Dave Morris

KEY

- Path
- Wall
- Gate
- Sliding Doors
- Tomb
- Shrine
- Offering Table
- Cliff
- Trees
- Beach
- Fishing Boat

0 | 100Feet



'A rack of cloud across the light of evening
As if they too, those distant hills, wore mourn-
ing weeds.'
—The Tale of Genji

Player's Introduction

Your lord is worried by reports from an outlying demesne, in Kii province. Peasants have been terrorised by a spectral figure on the moors north of Asamimura village. This ghost appears to be a *preta*, or unquiet spirit, who will only be laid to rest by the proper *segaki*

(exorcism) services, performed over his bones. The lord intends to test the mettle of you, his young samurai, by sending you to the village as bodyguards with Sonjo, a Buddhist monk who will perform the necessary rites.

Sonjo the monk (level 3 Buddhist Gakusho)

| | | | |
|--------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Str: | 5 | Damage: | -1 |
| Dft: | 10 | BAP: | 5 |
| Spd: | 12 | MNA: | 1 |
| Hlh: | 12 | BMA: | 4 |
| Wit: | 20 | Power: | 40 |
| Will: | 25 | Hit Points: | 16 |

Skills: Jujutsu(13), Sacred Dance(16), Rhetoric(16), Butsu-do(17), Raja-Yoga (10), Gnana-yoga(11), Tea Ceremony(14), Meditation(12).

Sonjo is likely to take most of the credit or blame resulting from the mission – the players are being sent along merely as bodyguards. Sonjo is an enlightened (but not Enlightened!) fellow and will see the value of enlisting Ugestsu's [see below] aid.

Games Master's Introduction

This scenario is loosely based around a set of classical Japanese *kwaidan* (or ghost stories). The games master should use his own judgement and bring in suitable encounters when appropriate rather than slavishly following order. Read through the whole scenario carefully as this will provide ideas on how to present each encounter.

Description of Asamimura Monastery/Village The Moors

As the party approach Asamimura village

they will cross a stretch of barren moors, taking 4 hours. There is a 10% chance of an encounter every two hours.

1. 1-3 peasants (day only)
2. The Mujina (dusk or night only)
3. The Rokuro-kubi (night only)
4. 1 viper
5. 2-12 wolves
6. Watanabe Tetsu

The Mujina

| | | | |
|----------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Spirit Rank: | 2 | BAP: | 12 |
| Hit Points: | 18 | MNA: | 2 |
| Armour Class: | 1 | BMA: | 5 |
| Zanshin: | 1 | Magic BCS: | 11 |

Attack: Tanto, BCS 11, Damage 1d6 lethal.
Spell: *Traitor ground* (once a day).

She will lure people to her by sobbing and moaning as if in distress. She appears to be a normal woman, wearing a kimono made of rich material. Her face, however, is a terrifying blank, without eyes, ears or nose. When the party is ranged around her she will turn and reveal the true horror of her identity.

Out to sea and over the ruined graveyard at the monastery the dreaded demon fires, or *oni-bi*, can be seen to flit among the night's shadows. The squire's manor, (*ji-zamurai* Watanabe Tetsu) is now deserted and open to the elements. Tetsu himself had his sanity destroyed in an encounter with the *Mujina*. If encountered, Watanabe Tetsu will demand money from the party, swinging his *katana* wildly while doing so. At other times he will shout insanely about a 'faceless woman'.



Watanabe Tetsu (level 3 Bushi, former ji-zamurai of Asamimura)

| | | | |
|---------------|----|-------------|----|
| Str: | 25 | Damage: | +2 |
| Dft: | 18 | BAP: | 9 |
| Spd: | 16 | MNA: | 2 |
| Hih: | 18 | BMA: | 5 |
| Wit: | 18 | Hit Points: | 40 |
| Armour Class: | 1 | Will: | 25 |
| Zanshin: | 2 | | |

Skills: Kenjutsu(17) with Precision Strike(10), Atemi-Waza(14), Bajutsu(15), Iaijutsu(12), Kyujutsu(14), Armory(10), Hawking(13), Fishing(9), Tracking(10).

Equipment: Dai-sho, a few pieces of armour.

Since being driven insane by the *Mujina*, Tetsu has wandered the moors terrorising travellers. He is clad scantily and is extremely dirty. If taken to the shrine of Ugetsu the *kami*, Tetsu will recover his wits. He is a diligent martial artist but somewhat greedy and hardly of sterling character.

Because of him, the local peasants give the area a wide berth; occasionally one may be found, but it is more likely that he or she will flee than stop and be questioned. If a peasant is questioned he or she will report that 'new people' have moved into the village, that it is indeed the local *ji-zamurai* who wanders about the moors and paddy fields half-naked and mad (this with some embarrassment as Tetsu was once a much respected and feared man), that a holy innocent lives in the temple of the monastery and is fed by pious villagers from outlying areas, and, that despite the ruination of the monastery, some kind spirit or person still sees to it that the dead are buried when they are left inside the temple gate. They will also report that travellers have been terrorised by a ghost on the moors, particularly religious pilgrims and men of a pious mien; they, themselves however never venture out onto the moors at night, so therefore cannot verify this.

The Monastery

1. The Torii Gate. Beyond the gate stands a leafy grove. Just inside it there is a small offering table upon which various votive candles burn. A pallet with a shrouded figure lies before the table surrounded by bowls with offerings of rice and fish. This is the corpse of an old man left there sometime during the day. If the party approach at night, they may see the *Jikininki* appear and devour the corpse and the offerings, but this will only occur when all the candles on the shrine have either burnt or blown out. As the players inspect the pallet they may hear a rustling in the undergrowth and then the sounds of someone or something making their way, rather clumsily, through the bushes. This will be Hoichi who, having picked up his meagre portion of food from the funeral party, is hur-

riedly making his way back to the ruined monastery before the *Jikininki* arrives for his dinner. Scattered around the grounds of the monastery where they are not obscured by the entangling undergrowth will be seen numerous *go-rin-ishi* (the five circle funerary stone of Nippon).

2. Amidaji Temple. Deserted for a hundred years and in some disrepair, mosses grow upon the door posts, holes are visible in the once-elegant sloping roof, trailers hang down from the eaves. Across what once must have been an ornamental pond, the monk's quarters have all but collapsed into piles of mildewed boards.

Approaching the temple, a strong smell of incense pervades the air, and (if Hoichi has not been accidentally slain or is entertaining Lord Akiyama's ghost in the graveyard) the strains of an unearthly singing with accompaniment of the highest quality from the *biwa* will be heard. At night, no light will appear in the inner sanctuary where the music is coming from. Unseen things will scuttle away at their approach to hide behind statues and in crevices in the cracked floor stones. The players may be alarmed when Hoichi, presenting a spectral sight, rises up before them in the darkness; he will be naked except for a loincloth, his body is covered with tattoos of the holy *sutras* as a ward against evil spirits, his unseeing eyes will have a glazed and faintly luminous quality. Sonjo will recognise the holiness of the tattoos immediately, but he may be too late to prevent a nervous player from striking...

Hoichi, the blind, rather timid, *biwa* (Nipponese lute) player who lives in the ruined monastery, will tell of certain nights when a samurai comes to fetch him and takes him to play before a great lord. Hoichi is unaware that on these nights he is playing for the ghost of Akiyama, who finds in the beautiful music a momentary surcease from his torment. Hoichi remains in the monastery precincts at all other times and is safe from the *Rokuro-kubi* who dare not enter. He should be treated as an 'extra' (one hit kills him) with a *Biwa BCS* of 19.

3. The Island of the Kami. A small dilapidated shrine made of stone and wood stands on top of the pinnacle island. The shrine was once connected to the mainland by a rope bridge which hangs severed from the side of the island. The bridge appears to have been cut from the mainland where the cut-through ends of the supporting ropes can still be seen attached to stanchions. At night *oni-bi* (demon fires) can be seen to flit around the island, although they are not seen in the shrine. The good *Kami* Ugetsu dwells in the shrine. The *Rokuro-kubi* who wished to dispel his benign magical influence from their stalking grounds, cut the bridge. Ugetsu will reward anyone who repairs the bridge by

Instruction. The only way to reach the island is to scale its vertical slopes from a boat; this will be fatal in nearly all cases (a sheer climb at -3 from Climbing capability) unless the player makes use of the rope bridge for the last fifty feet of the ascent. Despite its rotted appearance, the bridge is still magically imbued, and anyone making use of it will be protected by Ugetsu.

Ugetsu, the local *Kami*, is a *Jigami* whose shrine is set on a pinnacle of rock which could be reached via a rope bridge from the cliffs. The *Rokuro-kubi* cut the bridge to prevent neighbouring villagers from making offerings to him.

Ugetsu the Kami

| | | | |
|---------------|----|------------|----|
| Spirit Rank: | 4 | BAP: | 10 |
| Hit Points: | 20 | MNA: | 2 |
| Armour Class: | 5 | BMA: | 7 |
| Zanshin: | 2 | Magic BCS: | 8 |

Powers: *Instruct*, *Fertility* (fields), *Fertility* (births), *Control Phenomena* within 1.2 Ri (about 5 miles) of shrine.

Spells: (four times a day each) *dark circle*, *master of the green*, *confusing gaze*, *burning touch*.

Skills: Tonfa-te 14, Nunchaku-te 14, Popular Dance 16, Fishing 16.

Ugetsu will appear as an impressive man in silk robes of green dyed with subtle patterns of brown reminiscent of the paddy fields.

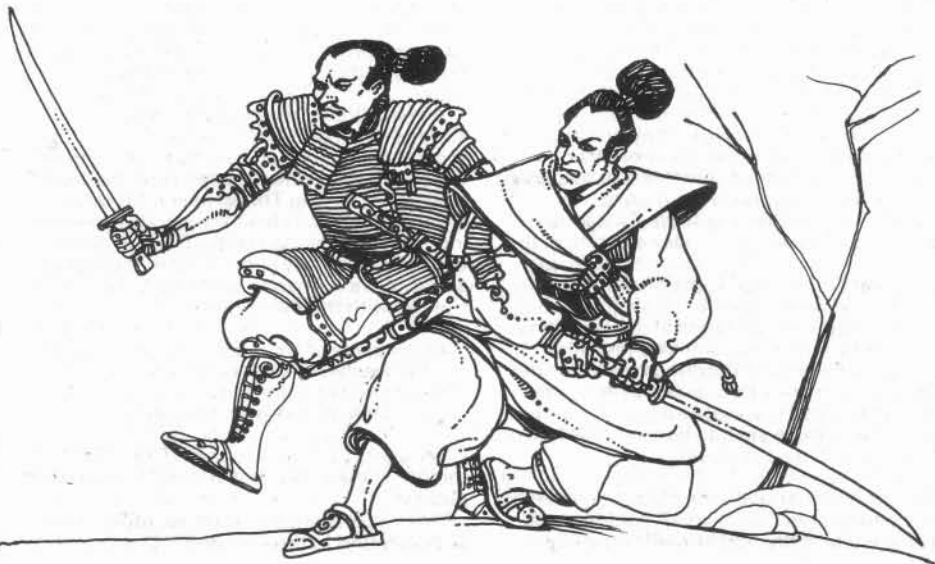
4: The Graveyard. Here there is a 20% chance of an encounter every two hours.

1. The ghost of Tadafune Akiyama (nights of the new moon only).
2. The *Mujina* (dusk or night only). Two *Torii* gates (NW and E) lead into the enclosed areas which is now extremely overgrown with ferns and bramble. Around the walls stand the moss-covered *go-rin-ishi* (five-stone tombs) commemorating Lord Akiyama's men. In the graveyard, teetering upon the edge of the eroded cliff-face, stands a larger *go-rin-ishi* which covers Akiyama's grave. An inscription on one of the stones bears the lord's name although this is totally obscured by moss and lichen. Underneath are lines commemorating the sea battle that took place off Asamimura in which Akiyama perished. Players with a good memory for music may recognise in them parts of the songs recited by Hoichi in the temple (that is, if they have heard them). In front of the larger tomb and right at the edge of the cliff, there is an area of flattened grass and bracken where it appears someone has been sitting. Hoichi will be seen to sit here as he recites in front of the tomb at night; Akiyama who leads him down to the cliff's edge from the temple, fades into the five stone tomb at the beginning of the recital. The tomb could be said to resemble a seated man. Akiyama's treasure will be found buried underneath his tomb next to his funerary urn. [see stats.]

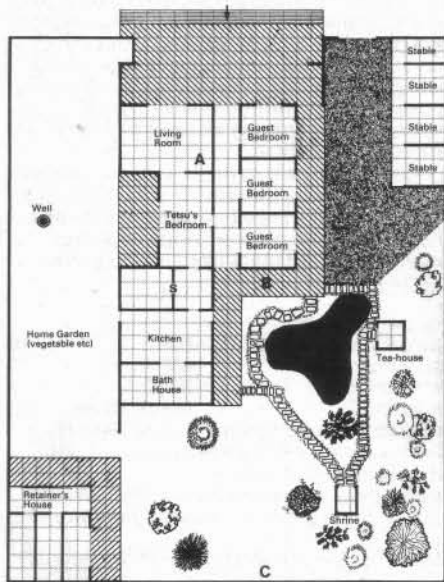
The *oni-bi* frequent the graveyard at all times of the night, and many can be seen whirling around Hoichi's head during his performance. *Oni-bi* are harmless supernatural manifestations.

At the edge of the eroded cliff parts of the graveyard's wall and the lesser tombs hang over empty space. Looking down one can see human bones protruding from the cliff-face where Akiyama's men are about to return to the watery grave a hundred feet below from whence they were pulled.

On rough stormy nights a dreadful wailing can be heard to come from out at sea. The waters are said to be haunted by the ghost of a noble warrior, Tadafune Akiyama, who 200 years ago, died with several of his men in a sea-battle against a band of pirates. Their bodies were brought in and buried up on the cliffs and Amidaji Temple, a small Buddhist foundation, was then set up to commemorate their deaths. The sea has since eroded the cliff so that half the original graveyard has collapsed away, spilling the mortal remains into▷



Ji ZAMURAI'S MANOR HOUSE



Jo, BCS 14, Damage 1d6+3 subdual.
Spells: Three uses per day of *shadow cloak*, as cast by level 2 Shugenja.
Powers: *Bewilder* (treat as *Awe* but victims never pass out and the effect vanishes when Jikininki departs). *Minor Invulnerability* (takes half damage from non-magical weapons).

The *Jikininki* is a kind of *Gaki*. This one was called Hobei, an ex-Buddhist monk. He usually appears as a normal man, dwelling in his *anjitsu* (priest's hermitage). He feeds on corpses left at the temple gate. This takes five rounds, and if Hobei is wounded he recovers 5 hit points by eating a corpse. Hobei will fight if thwarted from reaching a corpse but once he is glutted he will depart. In his human form, Hobei is surly and irascible but basically conrtrite about his condition. He was an avaricious priest who thought only of the payment when he performed burial rites, and this dishonour has caused him to become a *Jikininki*. If the party somehow find out the truth about him and confront him with it he will break down in shame and ask to be given *Segaki* rites. After the rites have been performed he and his hut will vanish, leaving the players beside Hobei's moss-covered tomb. Burning the body is not necessary.

The Village of Asamimura
 Consists of a small *ji-zamurai* mansion and a dozen or so peasant huts.
 By night Asamimura is stalked by such grisly nightmares as the undead *Jikininki* and the faceless *Mujina*.

The village of Asamimura is in fact quite desolate – though it appears to be inhabited by a few hardy peasants these are actually *Rokuro-kubi*. By night they hunt, with a 15% chance every two hours of returning to the village.

The Rokuro-kubi
Spirit Rank: 2 **BAP:** 12
Armour Class: 6 **MNA:** 2
Zanshin: 2 **BMA:** 5
Attack: Bite, BCS: 12, Damage 1d3 lethal.
Hit Points: Headman 15, Strongman: 18, Others 10, 11, 6, 8, 9, 10, 6, 4.
Treasure: 2 silver, 40 copper on their persons and hidden in their huts. The *Rokuro-kubi* all act as classic 'Average Men' by day. The Headman is crafty and Strongman is slow-witted; all the others (three women and two children plus men) are of average intelligence.

They appear by day as humble fishermen/farmers of the village. They will be hospitable and put up the party in the dilapidated manor where the squire Tetsu lived. At night they revert to type and will attempt to devour numbers of the party. If the party approaches Asamimura at night they will find the village apparently deserted with several headless bodies, in a state of perfect preservation, lying in some of the houses. Moreover the necks of the bodies will not appear severed, but look as a stalk does when a leaf has been plucked from it. The *Rokuro-kubi* dislike Hobei the *Jikininki* – he devours corpses they would like for themselves. They will tell the players that a *gaki* stalks the monastery grounds and it is probably this that has been terrorising travellers on the moors.

6. The Village Offering Table. Closer observation will reveal that the stone shrine at the centre of the village dedicated to the local *kami*, Ugetsu, has had some of its stones dislodged, perhaps in a gale. This damage has not been repaired, and further disrespect has been shown to the *kami* in that the fallen stones now serve as mooring stones for the fishing boats drawn up on the beach. The fishing nets laid out as if to dry next to the boats will also be seen to be in some state of disrepair if looked at closely.

7. Beach of Skulls. On the northern edge of the beach, underneath the cliffs, players may spot what appear to be small boulders and bits of white driftwood strewn about. On

closer inspection they will be seen to be skulls and bones of Akiyama's men eroded from the cliff above and washed up on the beach by the tide. These relics will be brown in colour; scattered amongst them are the far whiter bones of the *Rokuro-kubi*'s latest victims.

8. The Ji-zamurai's Mansion. There is a 15% chance of an encounter for every two hours spent in Tetsu's dilapidated house.

1. The *Mujina* (dusk or night only)
2. The *Rokuro-kubi* (appearing as normal peasants if during the day)

On close inspection, a few things will appear to be amiss:

(i) The floorboards of many of the rooms and also that of the teahouse appear to have been prised up and then roughly hammered down again. The garden appears to have been dug over thoroughly in a number of places and the earth thrown back loosely to cover the holes. This damage was caused by the *Rokuro-kubi* looking for Tetsu's hidden gold.
 (ii) One of the bedrooms (no 3) appears to be not as dusty as the others. A few spots of brown, dried blood may be found on the underside of one of the *tatami* mats; the *Rokuro-kubi*'s last victim was devoured here. A pilgrim staff will be found to have been thrown into the undergrowth of the garden.

(iii) A bow with a rotted string and a mildewed quiver of arrows will be found amongst the weeds on the southern porch (B). A target butt, partially obscured by climbing plants, stands against the southern garden wall (C); one or two arrow-heads are still stuck into it. Two burnt-out torch stubs stand to either side of it, set into the ground. Anyone with any knowledge of archery may make their BCS role to discover that the bow shows signs of fine workmanship (a 3 Man-Rating *dai-kyu*, worth 50 silver when refurbished).

Tetsu, was practising archery one night by the light of the torches; suddenly he heard the sound of sobbing coming from the bushes near the butt. Fearing he had accidentally wounded someone hiding in the undergrowth, he left his bow on the terrace and approached the bushes. In the light of the torches he saw a young woman kneeling on the grass with averted face. As he neared her she turned to reveal the terrible featureless face of the *Mujina*. Tetsu has been mad ever since and has never returned to the mansion.

A suit of armour stands in the living room (A), antique-looking with fine embossing. A now extinct clan crest is set into the helmet (the crest is of a wysteria blossom and is made of enamel). A character must make his heraldry BCS to identify as the Tadafune clan emblem. The armour belonged to Lord Tadafune. Its value is 90 gold pieces. It is reputedly haunted, and this has deterred the *Rokuro-kubi* from pilfering it. This rumour has basis in fact; on moonlit night a low ghostly moaning may be heard coming from it. A player approaching closer will hear Lord Akiyama's hollow voice commanding him to find a Buddhist priest so that his body may be reburied with proper rites.

A chest (lock complexity 6) stands in the storage room of Tetsu's manor. The chamber is carefully concealed behind sliding panels which resemble the woodwork of the outer walls. (Wit Saving Throw to see a Hidden Thing). Inside the chest are scrolls representing the deeds of the estate. There is also one with Tetsu's family name (Watanabe) set as a seal into wax. Anyone opening it will be confronted with the following poem:

*In the place of cha no yu
 Look westward to the setting sun,
 Bright beneath the water
 Brighter fish than goldfish swim.*

(This refers to an urn sunk by Tetsu in the middle of the pond, in it will be found 9 gold pieces).

Such accessories as torches, ropes, linen, will be found in the kitchen. □

▷ the waters below – or sometimes onto the beach, where the *Rokuro-kubi* come to feast on the rotted corpses. The spirit of Akiyama grows increasingly restless as his own grave will soon be breached by the erosion. His ghost roams on nights of the new moon – for on such a night was he slain – seeking a priest who will rebury him and perform the *Segaki* service to quieten his spirit.

The Ghost of Lord Akiyama
Spirit Rank: 5 **BAP:** 10
Hit Points: 45 **MNA:** 2
Armour Class: 10 **BMA:** 5
Zanshin: 2
Attack: Katana, BCS 19, Damage 1d6+3 lethal.
Treasure: In grave, a netsuke of a *ki-rin* (The Steed of Heaven from the *Bushido* rules, 3 charges).

The ghost is a *Shura*, gaunt and wild-eyed but much as Akiyama looked when alive. He speaks in a hollow tormented voice, commanding those before him to retrieve his body from its grave on the cliffs and to give it proper burial elsewhere.

5. The Anjitsu. Here stands a simple stone tomb covered by moss and lichen. Below it lie the mortal remains of the bad Buddhist priest Hobei, now a *Jikininki*. Players passing near the grove whilst Hobei is still in human form may hear a faint moaning sound, and, approaching nearer, even the sound of grating teeth. Instead of the tomb, the players will see an *anjitsu* or hermitage, in the form of a small cottage constructed of stone, with a sloping, gabled roof made of wood. This will disappear once Hobei has made his confession and *segaki* rites are performed over his body, or when in *gaki* form.

The Jikininki (corpse eating Gaki)
Str: 30 **Spirit Rank:** 3
Dft: 20 **Hit Points:** 25
Spd: 20 **Armour Class:** 5
Hlh: 3 **Damage:** +3
Wit: 5 **BAP:** 10
Will: 33 **MNA:** 2
Zanshin: 2 **BMA:** 7
Magic BCS: 8
Attack: 2 talons, BCS 12, Damage 1d6 lethal

DMs Introduction

The Necromancer [WD35], Malmart was recently forced to leave the town of Arkand, as his vile and evil practices had got out of hand. He escaped with his 'life' (badly wounded) and a few meagre possessions, including his Dorianic Portrait [see below].

He moved into an ancient burial barrow near the village of Coldbrook, itself about 50 miles from Arkand. Here, he is continuing his depraved research and has already grabbed several victims from the village to manufacture a few ghouls before returning to Arkand to have his revenge.

Dorianic Portrait
By M Abrahams

A necromancer can use this to forestall the effects of age, physical evidence of evil, hit point damage and diseases. The portrait allows the necromancer to live in society without seeming obviously vile.

To create a *Dorianic Portrait* a top quality full-size portrait must be obtained (at suitable expense). This must be presented to the necromancer's god during a ceremony at which the 'minimum annual sacrifice' [see WD35] must be made. If his god grants the necromancer's wish (60% chance, only attempted once a lifetime) the portrait will absorb the visible effects of evil into itself, so the picture ages whilst the necromancer looks as young, healthy and 'good' as the day of the ceremony. The loss of charisma due to level rises is negated and the necromancer seems a reasonably ordinary man (assuming he was not too corrupt when he created the portrait).

If a saving roll vs death magic is made it will heal combat damage – up to 1d4 a week, and diseases may be transferred to the portrait. Keep a note of all damage and diseases transferred in this way. If the portrait is destroyed then all the evil and stored years are transferred back to the necromancer, wherever he is. This also happens when the canvas rots of its own accord. The necromancer's charisma will drop to zero and he may well be killed by the loss of hit points/diseases. The canvas lasts d20 x 25 years. If the necromancer dies in combat then the canvas will crumble and inflict its burden on the corpse.

Consequently, Malmart is now looking relatively normal.

Players Introduction

The players are passing through the village of Coldbrook (or any village the DM would like to use this for). Not unnaturally, they decide to spend the night in the village inn.

Immediately apparent is an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. Nobody is found going outdoors at night, windows and doors are securely locked and boarded etc.

The village headman will approach the players, offer them a drink and tell them this story:

'There have been several disappearances recently. Search parties have been completely unsuccessful – no tracks have been found, no clues – nothing. The shepherd-boy, Glamis, returned last night from his day's work completely insane and babbling. He is now at home in his bed, raving.'

Treasure Chest is a regular D&D department. This issue we present a short mini-scenario based around some readers' magic items for a low level party, by Jamie Thomson.

The Portrait



He will offer 150gp (all the village can spare) to the 'warrior adventurers' if they'll help the village, discover what's going on, and put a stop to it.

The players should visit Glamis in the morning. All they will be able to gather, amid his delirious burlblings, are the repeated phrases, 'winged skull', 'howling of the dead' and 'the old barrow on the hill'. Glamis is plainly terrified – out of his wits with fear... The headman will explain that the barrow on the hill is an ancient burial mound, hundreds of years old. Obviously, the players should pay it a visit.

The players will be directed to the barrow and will find the entrance set into the side of the hill, flanked by 3 large Stonehenge-type stone blocks. A smell of decay, foetid and dark, wafts from the portal. Inside, is a single cavern – about 30' x 30'. Immediately, Malmart's Skull Guard [see WD35 for stats] will attack the players. Malmart himself is nowhere to be seen. After dealing with the Skull Guard the players will see a large slab with the body of a recent victim on it, in some sort of state of preparation for some diabolical necromancy. In a corner of the tomb stands the portrait of an extremely degenerate and evil looking man. What's more the painting depicts him as severely wounded – in fact barely alive. A wooden desk (next to a straw pallet) has various items on it – dead rats, heads, bottles of blood, Books of the Dead etc, of course.

At this point Malmart himself will enter the barrow. (He was out getting food.)

Malmart, 6th level Necromancer [WD35] Str: 18.00, Wis: 7, Int: 16, Dex: 12, Con: 15, Cha: 10 (5). Abilities: *Evil Eye, Speak with Dead, Animate Dead, Grave Noises, Manufacture Ghoul, Sense Life, Create Skull Guard, Unholy Strength of the Eternally Damned* (performed on himself). AC: 10. Dagger, short sword, *Ebony Horn*. Hit Points: 24.

Having realised he has 'guests' Malmart (looking fairly normal), will do some quick thinking and announce himself as a messenger from the village ('the headman wants to see you'), to gain a few moments time. Players may notice a certain similarity between Malmart and the portrait if they make a saving roll against intelligence. As soon as he can Malmart will blow his *Ebony Horn*, ordering the undead to attack the players.

Ebony Horn
by Mark Byng

This ornate black horn does not require a command word to operate but only clerics, fighters, thieves and necromancers can use it. Once per week it can be used to summon undead. When the horn is blown roll 1d10:

| Die Roll | Number & Type of Undead summoned | Chance of Control |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 1-20 Skeletons | 100% |
| 2 | 1-10 Zombies | 100% |
| 3 | 1-10 Ghouls | 95% |
| 4 | 1-6 Shadows | 90% |
| 5 | 1-4 Wights | 85% |
| 6 | 1-4 Ghosts | 85% |
| 7 | 1-3 Wraiths | 80% |
| 8 | 1-2 Mummies | 75% |
| 9 | 1-2 Spectres | 75% |
| 10 | 1 Vampire/1 Ghost | 70%/65% |

On the round after blowing the horn the summoner must concentrate on controlling the undead (+5% for necromancers). Check each summoned creature individually, those undead which are controlled are completely at the summoner's command, those which aren't may do as the DM wishes. If the character activating the horn is good then he/she will be unable to control any of the summoned undead and attack on the summoner will be automatic.

The summoning lasts until the undead are slain or until 2d4 Turns have elapsed; whichever occurs first. Should there be any additional undead (victims of vampires, wraiths etc) they will disappear along with their 'masters'. If the players seem to be defeating his undead Malmart will *Animate* the corpse on the slab but will only enter the combat if he has to. He won't try to escape unless things are going very badly and he has his portrait. Malmart's main concern will be to keep the players away from the portrait, or to separate them from it. He will order his undead to this end. He will become very agitated if anyone goes near it. Destroying the portrait will cause Malmart to lose 22 hit points immediately and he will fall to the ground, temporarily incapacitated – any undead will stand motionless while control wavers (unless he's already wounded, in which case he'll die – no chance to *curse*). The players will have one free round in which to finish him off (if they've any brains!). □

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THE SUNFIRE'S HEART
An Epic AD&D Adventure

NIGHT'S DARK AGENTS
Ninja and Ninjutsu in FRP



-ACHILLEOS-

NIGHT'S DARK AGENTS

**Ninja and
Ninjutsu in
Role-Playing
Games by
Chris Elliott
and Richard
Edwards**

He whose sable arms, Black as his purpose, did the night resemble.

Hamlet II ii

For the most part, introducing elements of Japanese society into RPGs doesn't present too many problems. It is fairly easy to get information from libraries on the samurai, and provided appropriate allowances are made for the effects of the Japanese social system, players and referees can draw on European feudal models for commoners, the priesthood, magicians and thieves without going too badly astray. The ninja, however, are different. They have no real counterpart in European history, and despite their continuing popularity as subjects for books, films and television series, reliable information about them is hard to come by. This is not really surprising; all feudal Japanese institutions were obsessively secret, and the nature of ninjutsu means it would be doubly so. This series of articles is designed to explain who the ninja were, how they operated, and how they can be incorporated into role-playing games.

The Art of Stealth

Some estimates put the beginnings of ninjutsu as early as 500BC, and they are recorded as having been hired as spies by Prince Regent Shotoku Taishi in the 6th century AD. Their last major use was in 1637, during the Shimbara war against Christian rebels on Kyushu, but there is good reason to believe that ninja were active in government service during the Taisho era, 1912-1926, and even in the Showa era, which began in 1926 and is still continuing today. Ninjutsu is therefore probably as old as Japanese history, but it has not remained unchanged,

and this helps to explain the conflicting accounts of its origins. Like most Japanese institutions, ninjutsu seems to have come from Chinese influence on a native tradition, with the resulting product being uniquely Japanese. Prince Shotoku Taishi not only hired ninja, he was also a keen supporter of Buddhism, introduced about forty years before he came to power, and Chinese learning in general. Both of these, indirectly, were crucial to the development of ninjutsu. The Chinese classic *Sun Tzu - The Art of War* - eagerly taken up by Japanese generals, had a section on espionage which is likely to have influenced the existing Japanese tradition. (The characters for ninjutsu can be read as 'shinobi jutsu', from shinobi 'to steal in', and jutsu 'art' or 'technique'; hence, 'the art of stealth'.) During the bloody Gempei Wars between the Taira and Minamoto clans in 1180-1185, the Minamoto are said to have relied heavily on ninjutsu. Minamoto Yoshitsune, who finally defeated the Taira, is known to have studied the *Sun Tzu*, and allegedly had special training in ninjutsu. Early ninjutsu seems, therefore, to have been primarily a technique of military espionage.

Around the 9th and 10th centuries esoteric (secret) Buddhist teachings began to arrive from mainland China. These were spread by sects which, in contrast to those preaching Buddhism to the population in general, reserved their teachings for initiates. In 806, the monk Kukar had returned from China and introduced the Shingon sect, which established its headquarters at Mount Koya. Shingon Buddhism, the *School of the True Word*, practised Mikkyo, or secret doctrines involving mystical practices. In theory, these brought enlightenment which would allow students to tap the powers of the Buddha/Universe. In practice, they were a form of magic through incantations and spells, and the best known are the kuji-no-in, the 'nine signs'. (These appear in *Bushido* as the kuji-kuri, but were more than just a sign language. The hand positions which form the signs are shown in the book of the BBC series *The Way of the Warrior*, together with an explanation of how they were used.) Although Zen Buddhism is usually associated with the samurai, it was not introduced until nearly four hundred years after Shingon Buddhism, and many higher ranking samurai practised esoteric Buddhism.

The ninja also absorbed these teachings, and it was their use of mikkyo practices which helped to give them a reputation for sorcerous powers. Along with the secret teachings of Chinese Buddhism came warrior monks teaching the martial arts, and generals and commanders fleeing the collapsing Tang dynasty. All of these were to influence the survivors of defeated clans who fled to the mountainous provinces of south central Honshu in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries. Such refugees became jizamurai (samurai living like farmers) or lost samurai status altogether, but in the course of fighting for survival against superior forces, they became the nuclei of the ninja clans. This fight had the effect of making them close allies of the warrior monks, especially the yamabushi, who made frequent use of them in their

power struggle with the samurai.

On the principle of 'once bitten, twice shy', the ninja never abandoned the secrecy that had enabled them to survive and had given ninjutsu its emphasis on subtle manipulation of an opponent, rather than direct force, but in time they came to wield considerable power. There were over 25 major centres of ninja activity in Iga and Koga provinces in Kamakura times, and at one time they virtually controlled Kyoto by night. During the civil war which raged for over 80 years until Ieyasu unified Japan, they flourished. Despite the alleged abhorrence with which the samurai regarded the ninja, the relationship between them was intimate. Oda Nobunaga, who smashed the power of the Buddhist warrior monks, is also recorded as sending 46,000 troops against the ninja of Momochi Sandayu, boss of Koga province, in 1581. This did not prevent him employing his own ninja, led by one Kenpachi, who he sent against his enemies, such as Uesugi Kenshin. (It helps explain the fear inspired by the ninja when you learn that Kasumi Danjo, the leader of Uesugi's own ninja, had survived an ambush in which the rest of his colleagues had fallen, and killed the assassin threatening Kenshin, that his employer was still killed by Ukifune Jinna, a dwarf ninja who had hidden himself, armed with a spear, inside Kenshin's privy.) Takeda Shingen, famous from Kurosawa's *Kagemusha*, made great use of the ninja, and is credited with important advances in their signalling and message techniques. The power of the ninja at that time is shown by the fact that he also attacked Momochi Sandayu, sending a ninja called Hajika no Jubei.

With the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate, and the unification of Japan, the role of the ninja changed again. The rising power of the merchant class brought employment from this quarter, and they were also a key part of the system that enabled the Tokugawas to dominate the country for over 250 years. The metsuke, or 'censors' are best known now for their seals on woodblock prints, but they were also the shogunate's secret police, and the ninja, particularly the Hattori family of Koga, were notorious as their agents. With the coming of peace to Japan, ninjutsu lost the hostile climate to be a way of life for an entire section of the population. Although ninjutsu is still taught to a handful of students, preserved like other links with the past, the shadow warriors are like the samurai; their modern descendants are very different people, in a different world. Like the samurai, though, the ninja are the stuff of legend, and with the advent of role-playing games seem set for a new lease of life.

The Artists of Stealth

The historical pressures that created and shaped the ninja and ninjutsu produced a remarkable breed of men and women. A ninja was born into a subculture where secrecy was a way of life, and whose outlook was supremely practical. This not only meant that they acquired a formidable array of specialised techniques and devices, but also that they became adept at achieving their ends through ingenious uses (or abuses) of items in

general use, and the manipulation of their opponents.

Ninja training began early, at about five or six years old, with the development of balance and agility. At about nine the training concentrated on suppleness and flexibility, with the result that adult ninja could squeeze through tiny openings, hide in minute spaces, and like Harry Houdini, dislocate their joints at will. The young ninja also practised the basic techniques of unarmed combat, and later use of the sword and staff. Associated with each clan was a ryu (school or teaching) of ninjutsu, and from about twelve onwards, ninja were taught the special weapons and techniques of their ryu. They also made long runs to develop stamina, and spent hours in cramped quarters or hanging from trees to build patience and endurance. Swimming techniques, on and under the surface, woodcraft, and silent movement were also important. Later in their training, they were taught techniques of entry and escape, mapping and sketching, the preparation of medicines and chemicals, and the skills of acting and applied psychology that were so important to them.

Just as the roles of the ninja can be summarised for convenience as spy, commando and assassin, so the techniques and equipment used by them can be grouped under a number of headings. In other articles in this series, we will look in more detail at incorporating ninjutsu into *AD&D* and *BuneQuest*, and develop it in *Bushido*, but for those of you who use another system, the following can serve as a basis from which to work. It is a reasonably comprehensive, but by no means complete summary of the skills and tools of ninjutsu. If you are not familiar with Japanese history and martial arts, the names may look a bit daunting, but whenever possible we have given translations. Two tips may also help; try breaking the words down into syllables, eg Shuriken-jutsu becomes shu-ri-ken-ju-tsu (follow the bouncing ball!) and remember that 'jutsu' on the end of anything simply means 'art' or 'technique'.

Costume: Unless disguised, a ninja on a mission would wear the traditional shinobi-shozoku, consisting of split-toed shoes, trousers, jacket, gloves and hood. This was black or reddish black, and reversible. The inside was dark blue, green or white. (Japan has a very snowy winter).

Stealth: The ninja were expert in moving undetected, indoors and outdoors, in any terrain. They took advantage of cover and natural sounds, camouflaged themselves, and used a variety of techniques to confuse or distract the attention of scouts or guards. They had at least ten different techniques of footwork for moving over various surfaces, including 'nightingale' floors which were designed to squeak loudly when stepped on. The ninja employed special swimming techniques to move silently, and could hide underwater for long periods, breathing through a tube or from an air bag.

Endurance and Agility: Because of their training, ninja were capable of extraordinary feats. They were alleged to be able to cover 300 miles in three

days, and run without resting for up to 125 miles. The techniques of forced march used were called hayagake-jutsu. The technique of suppleness (nawanake-jutsu) has already been referred to, and allowed ninja not only to hide in confined spaces and pass through small gaps, but to escape from bindings or chains. Karumi-jutsu, or 'lightning' enabled the ninja to perform amazing feats of climbing and jumping, including the famous 'chakuzen-jutsu' – walking across walls or ceilings by using minute holds – or leaping up into the shadowy roof of a corridor to hide spread-eagled against the walls.

Survival and Woodcraft: Their operations often called for the ninja to live off the land, and they were accomplished trackers. The ability to move swiftly and without detection across all kinds of terrain made them dangerous opponents in wartime.

Martial Arts: Although it's convenient to divide these into armed and unarmed techniques, in practice this was not a rigid division. Jujutsu, the ancestor of modern judo and aikido, has been defined as the art of combat with minimum use of weapons. A ninja could fight with or without weapons, but would use whatever technique or mixture of techniques were most effective.

Unarmed: The ninja's weaponless combat system was known as taijutsu, and fell into two main techniques. Daken-taijutsu 'the way of attacking the

'What was that?'
'I don't know. Where?'
'There! A gleam of silvered steel in the moonlight – or a trick of the shadows, perhaps?'

bones' covered striking, kicking and blocking techniques. Ju-taijutsu 'relaxed body method' dealt with grappling and throwing techniques. Two more specialised techniques koppojutsu – 'bone breaking' and yubijutsu – 'nerve strikes' or attacks against the vital nerve centres of the body to paralyse, render unconscious or kill.

Armed: Generally speaking, all ninja were proficient with at least three weapons, and some were expert in as many as twenty. The four systems below were the most commonly used.

Sword: The ninjato, or ninja sword, was a slightly shorter weapon than the samurai's katana. Seldom decorated, its guard, the tsuba, was large and square, and the scabbard sword could be used as a step-up. The scabbard itself could contain powder to scatter in an opponent's eyes, be used as a probe, or with a removable tip become a breathing tube or a blowgun. Ninja were expert in taijutsu, a technique where the drawing of the sword and the first attack are all part of the same lightning-fast movement.

Sticks and Staves: Favourite weapons of the ninja, because they were readily improvised and formed part of many of the disguises they adopted, as well as being less obviously a weapon than a spear. Three main sizes were used; the 6' bo, the 4' jo, and the 3' long hambo (half-bo). Locks could be applied with the shorter staves to subdue an enemy. As many samurai learned to their cost,

when clashing with city patrolmen, a blow from a staff could shatter the finest blade like a twig.

Chains and Cords: Many Japanese weapons were modified by adding a chain or cord with which to attack or entangle an opponent. The kusari-gama, a rice sickle with a chain and weight on the hilt, was used by the samurai, but the similar kyoketsu shoge, which had a right angled blade and a hair rope, was unique to the ninja. The manriki-gusari, a chain with a weight at both ends, was known as a kusari-fundo when used by ninja. The kawa-naga, a grappling hook on a rope, was a climbing tool, but could also double as a weapon.

Throwing Blades: Known collectively as shuriken, these can be straight blades, ranging from needles to knives, or multi-pointed throwing stars. Although they could be poisoned, their main use was to distract or harass guards and pursuers. Shuriken could also be used in close range combat.

Gimmicks and Concealed Weapons: These were a trademark of the ninja. The shinobi-zue – 'ninja staff' – could contain a chain, sword or blinding powder, and be used as a smokescreen generator or blowgun. (Using a technique call fukiburi-jutsu, ninja could spit poisoned darts). Known as metsubushi, the blinding powders were usually made from ashes, pepper and sand, and could be thrown in 'eggs' which shattered on impact. Caltrops, or tetsubushi, were scattered to slow pursuit. A variety of collapsible ladders were used, as were nekode or shuko, hooked 'gloves' for climbing, and the shinobi kumade – 'ninja rake' – which telescoped out to form a climbing aid. A variety of bombs, mines, grenades, flash grenades and smoke bombs or powders were made use of, ignited from the doko or firepot concealed in the costume, or triggered by tripwires.

Chemistry and Herbalism: These arts were used to prepare medicines, poisons and many of the gimmicks mentioned above.

Hypnotism: Very little is known about saiminjutsu, the ninja art of hypnotism. Much was probably achieved by sleight of hand and the equivalent of conjurers tricks, but under the conditions most people met them, the ninja must have seemed sorcerers, able to work magic. Their use of the kuji-no-in, the mystic hand signs of Mikkyo Buddhism also contributed to this reputation.

Disguise: Although normally thought of as black-clad assassins, the ninja often used to disguise themselves as members of other groups, usually those found travelling the country. The most common were called the shichi-ho-de (seven ways of going):

1. Yamabushi – Mountain warrior-priest.
2. Sarugaku – Actor or entertainer.
3. Komuso – Wandering ascetic priest.
4. Ronin – Masterless samurai.
5. Akindo – Merchant.
6. Hokashi – Musician.
7. Shukke – Buddhist monk.

Next month, creating and playing ninja characters; more on ninja skills and equipment and an introduction to ninja tactics. □

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SKY RIG
A Traveller Adventure

THE SUNFIRE'S HEART
Part II of an AD&D Adventure

This is the second instalment of a series about role-playing the Ninjas of medieval Japan in AD&D, RuneQuest and Bushido.

Creating and Playing Ninja Characters by Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards

Last issue, we outlined the role of the historical ninja, and the range of skills and equipment that made possible their uncanny feats. This part suggests ways of incorporating them into AD&D and RuneQuest, and expanding them as a profession in Bushido. As far as possible, this has been done within the original rules, rather than by creating new ones. This should make it easier to integrate the material with current campaigns.

NINJA IN AD&D

Both the assassin and monk character classes can be used as the basis for ninja characters, the assassin having skills of disguise and a secondary role as a spy, and the monk having skills derived from the martial arts. We have, therefore, given rules which are based on a synthesis of these two classes.

The rigorous early training of ninja would be reflected in high attribute scores for dexterity and constitution, and overall we suggest the following minimum scores:

| S | I | W | D | C | Ch |
|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| 12 | 11 | 9 | 15 | 11 | 5 |

Hit points should be rolled as for thieves and assassins, and the same table used for experience levels. The concept of alignments is not one that fits very well with this sort of character, but the closest is probably that of true neutral. When all the druids reading this have finished throwing fits, the reason for this is that the ninja's use of any and every form of deceit and violent death sprang from professionalism rather than any commitment to the principle of evil, and at its highest, their role was to act as keepers of the social balance in a society divided against itself. AD&D is biased toward humans, but within the guidelines in the *Player's Handbook*, there is no reason why other races should not have similar castes, although because of the clan basis on which they would also be organised, it would be almost unthinkable for a non-human to be accepted into a human ninja clan, and vice versa. The use of magic is tricky, because although all classes in AD&D can use magic items, only two can cast spells, and the ninja are neither magicians nor priests. As with monks, they should be able to use enchanted weapons, rings, and the magic items designed for thieves and assassins, and gain the ability to attempt scrolls at higher levels. Whether or not they are allowed to learn



Player character ninja must always be members of a clan/ryu (school) and this should also apply to NPC ninja unless there are convincing reasons otherwise. Any treasure and magic items acquired must be surrendered to the referee, acting as the chunin (middle man) controlling the ninja, but items may be loaned back when needed for specific missions.

NINJA IN RUNEQUEST

The skills of ninjutsu can be simulated in *RuneQuest* without too many problems, but the ninja need a non-Glorantha setting. While the guidelines below are compatible with the basic rules, therefore, we have not tried to relate them to the various cults and groups covered there and in the supplements.

Because of their early training, even young ninja were already far above the average in terms of physical abilities, as well as having a good grounding in a daunting variety of specialist skills. To reflect this in a character would mean starting them at advanced skill levels, and thus giving them an unfair advantage over ordinary characters. In an established campaign, where other players are already well advanced, you could use the rules for apprenticeship on p104 of the rulebook, and assume that five years training in all the appropriate skills has been given. The other alternative is to start a ninja character as any other, and assume that they are learning the hard way, by being given missions. Whether they keep a share of any loot to pass to the ryu as their fee, or receive nothing, or whether the other players pay a fee to the referee for their services is a matter of choice and the circumstances of the campaign. They should not earn money of their own, or acquire valuable items, but should have the benefit of free training and equipment from their ryu to compensate.

It is desirable for ninja characters to have minimum Strength and Dexterity scores of 13, and high Constitution and Intelligence. Size can be low, and charisma is unimportant. Power is dealt with below, along with the use of magic, but it should ideally start low and be increased through experience.

SKILLS

These were outlined in the first part of this series, and are now given as character abilities. Some additional information is given, mainly aimed at *Bushido* players and referees, but which should also be of general interest.

NIGHT'S DARK AGENTS

some clerical spells to correspond to the kuji-no-in (nine signs) is for you and your referee to agree. Some suggestions are given below if you decide to do this. Generally speaking, though, it is not the principle of classes other than MUs and Clerics using magic that unbalances a game, so much as careless refereeing which allows too rapid progression of characters or the acquisition of too many magic items too easily.

To prevent ninja characters becoming supermen (or women) we have left the more specialised skills as optional extras which can be studied at the expense of further progression in the basic abilities. This means that on reaching second level and above, a ninja can opt to leave a basic ability such as silent movement unchanged, and instead gain a new skill. Once this has been done, the same decision must be made each time a new level is gained, ie improve abilities already gained, including specialist skills with more than one level, or gain new ones.

Costume

AD&D: The ninja's costume (*shinobi shozoku*) is only equivalent to AC10, and even if you use their trick of sewing steel rods into the sleeves to block sword cuts, it still only becomes the equivalent of a shield, AC9. Armour was worn, but mainly on military missions, and not always then, and would in any case interfere with stealthy skills. The 'Effective Armour Class' column from the Monk class can be used to represent unarmed combat skills, though. The only other alternative is to avoid combat like the plague, and fight dirty when you have to. (A good bet in any case.)

RuneQuest: The trick mentioned above can be considered as being equivalent to a parry with chainmail sleeves, but shouldn't be relied upon.

Bushido: As well as concealing their tools and weapons in pockets of their costume, ninja also carried two types of soles for their tabi (shoes). One was a rubber/gum compound, for grip, and the other a cotton floss material for silence.

Stealth Skills

AD&D: These correspond to Move Silently, Hide in Shadows and Hear Noise. In the water, ninja should not receive penalties for combat, due to their training. By special breathing techniques, they could stay submerged for three minutes, or ten using an air bubble trapped in their costume, and indefinitely using a snorkel. Treat all as basic skills.

RuneQuest: Use the thief skills of Camouflage, Hide in Cover and Move Quietly. Normal swimming rules apply, but bear in mind the comments above.

Bushido: Ninja could swim upright carrying objects without wetting them, and use similar techniques to write or draw maps while treading water. By use of floats, they could move heavy or bulky objects just under water.

Endurance and Agility Skills

AD&D: Use the movement rates for monks, and also allow sideways movement at normal rates. This technique, called *yoko aruki* (sideways walking) allowed ninja to move through very narrow spaces, or to hug the walls of corridors and buildings, and also made it impossible to tell from the tracks which way they had been going. These are basic skills. To simulate binding and escape, or use of *nawanuke-jutsu* (suppleness) to squeeze into or through tiny spaces, a roll can be made against dexterity. Failure to bind a captive gives them a chance to escape, and failure of other areas can be at the referee's discretion. Binding, or *hojojutsu*, is a single level specialism, escape is a basic skill, as are other applications of suppleness. The rules for climbing walls should be modified when climbing aids are used, as these will considerably increase the chances of success.

RuneQuest: The normal daily movement rates should be adjusted to take account of the distances ninja could travel, while indoors a basic rate of 10 movement units should be a good level. The normal rules for climbing and jumping work well enough, but *nawanuke jutsu* and *chakuzen-jutsu* (ceiling walking) can be treated as separate skills.

Bushido: Ninja used poles or springboards (pulled up after them to prevent discovery) to clear walls eight, nine, or ten feet high, and this gained them a reputation for superhuman leaps. By use of an acrobatic 'ricochet' technique, they could in fact actually clear up to 25' lengthways in a single jump.

Survival and Woodcraft Skills

AD&D: Ninja should be allowed tracking skill equivalent to a ranger's, as a basic skill, and also the ability to live off the land outdoors, but not in a dungeon. They can use the special rations mentioned below in those, however.

RuneQuest: Tracking will be a skill taught by ninja ryu, as will survival, although the latter should be rolled on a daily basis, with failure leading to a loss of 1 point of Con per day, recovered at the same rate as damage from wounds. The rations below will avoid this problem, and can be prepared as a 'potion'.

Bushido: Between missions, your character can while away their leisure making *kito-gan*. These are tablets made from ground rice, millet dust, wheat germ, potato flour, Job's Tears (a type of plant), carrot scrapings, dried hakobe grass, and other secret ingredients. They provided field rations, and were alleged to delay thirst for up to five days.

Martial Arts

AD&D: Rather than using the unarmed combat rules on p72 of the *DMG* (Pummeling, Grappling and Overbearing), it is easier to use the monk's table for open hand attacks. This is a basic skill, but characters opting to learn *yubi-jutsu* (nerve strikes) as a specialist skill can add the 1/2HP per level to damage as monks. Those studying *yadome-jutsu* (arrow cutting) can knock away or dodge missiles like monks using their hands or weapons. Use the assassin's 'To Hit' table, and the same rules for weapon proficiency when dealing with armed combat, and take the bastard sword (ninjato), staff, and dart (shuriken) as initial weapons. The rules for grenades and breath weapons will cover powder attacks using blinding eggs or blowguns, and *iai-jutsu* (fast draw) can be treated as an advanced skill giving +1 to initiative for each level learned. The hex based combat system on p69 of the *DMG* is a help, if you don't already use it.

RuneQuest: The *RQ* rules for punches, kicks, grappling, defence, etc, can serve as a basis for martial arts. For *koppo-jutsu* (bonebreaking) treat the hands as light or heavy cesti, and progress as a normal weapon skill. *Yubi-jutsu* (nerve strikes) can be treated as claw attacks, with each successive level increasing by 1% the chance of a critical hit which will disable the limb concerned. Bearing in mind the comments on p100 of the basic rules, you can use statistics for the bastard sword, staff, sickle etc, for their ninja equivalents. Treat shuriken as throwing knives, using the rules for pitched shots, and for chain weapons assume a grappling attack is made to throw an opponent, without the chance for them to block a successful hit. They can also be used like a grain flail. Dave Morris' article on *RQ* samurai in *WD40* suggests treating *iai-jutsu* as a skill reducing the strike rank of a sword with

successive levels of mastery.

Bushido: Although it is not listed as a ninja *bugei*, you should include *bojutsu* (staff). It was characteristic of ninja weapons that they were often disguised, and the simple traveller's staff could become a deadly weapon, or itself conceal another, such as a chain or a blade. The nine shuriken (a lucky number) usually carried could be used as tools to dig, drill, and scrape, and an iron tobacco pipe could be just that, a weapon, or a snorkel. Ninjutsu is an approach, rather than a collection of exotic hardware, and the ninja were supreme improvisors and adapters.

Chemistry and Herbalism

These skills can be used to prepare poisons, explosives, secret inks, medicines and antidotes. It was common to poison water sources or leave out poisoned food to trap ninja, and because of this they not only avoided such hazards, but were expert at detecting poisoned substances through their scent and appearance. In *AD&D*, ninja can manufacture and detect poisons as an assassin would (use Find Traps), and can call on clan resources for the other items. The alchemist skills in *RuneQuest* and the Taste Analysis skill can be used in the same way.

Hypnotism

Saiminjutsu (ninja hypnotism) can be treated as sleight of hand, suggestion, magic, or a bit of each. *AD&D* players can use Pick Pockets for sleight of hand tricks, and ninja could be allowed limited clerical spell ability to represent use of the *kuji-no-in*. This should be a specialist skill, only available at 3rd level and above, and limited to appropriate spells such as *detect magic*, *find traps* and *command*. One spell per level is gained, to a maximum of nine, and these are limited to those useable by a cleric two levels lower than the ninja. In *RuneQuest*, the *kuji-no-in* can function as a focus for battle magic such as *ironhand*, *detect traps*, *countermagic*, etc. These should only be taught by a Buddhist temple, which will require payment by service. Pick Pockets skill can be used for sleight of hand. *Bushido* players can treat hypnotism as a Task, with a value depending on the circumstances, and use a BCS for sleight of hand similar to other practical skills. Don't make the effects too powerful in either case.

Ninja Tactics

Now you have a character with an arsenal of dirty tricks, the next question is how you use them. This is the subject of the third of these articles, which contains information on strategy and tactics. The difference between life and death can be a small thing like forgetting to use insect repellent. The ninja, Kirigakure Saizo, was speared through the floor by alert guards in the room above, who had noticed mosquitos hovering over his position.

How do you slip past sentries as if invisible, and confound pursuers by disappearing into thin air? How, when you are surrounded in a building which is then set alight, can you emerge unscathed? All this, and more, in the final part of *Night's Dark Agents*, next issue! □

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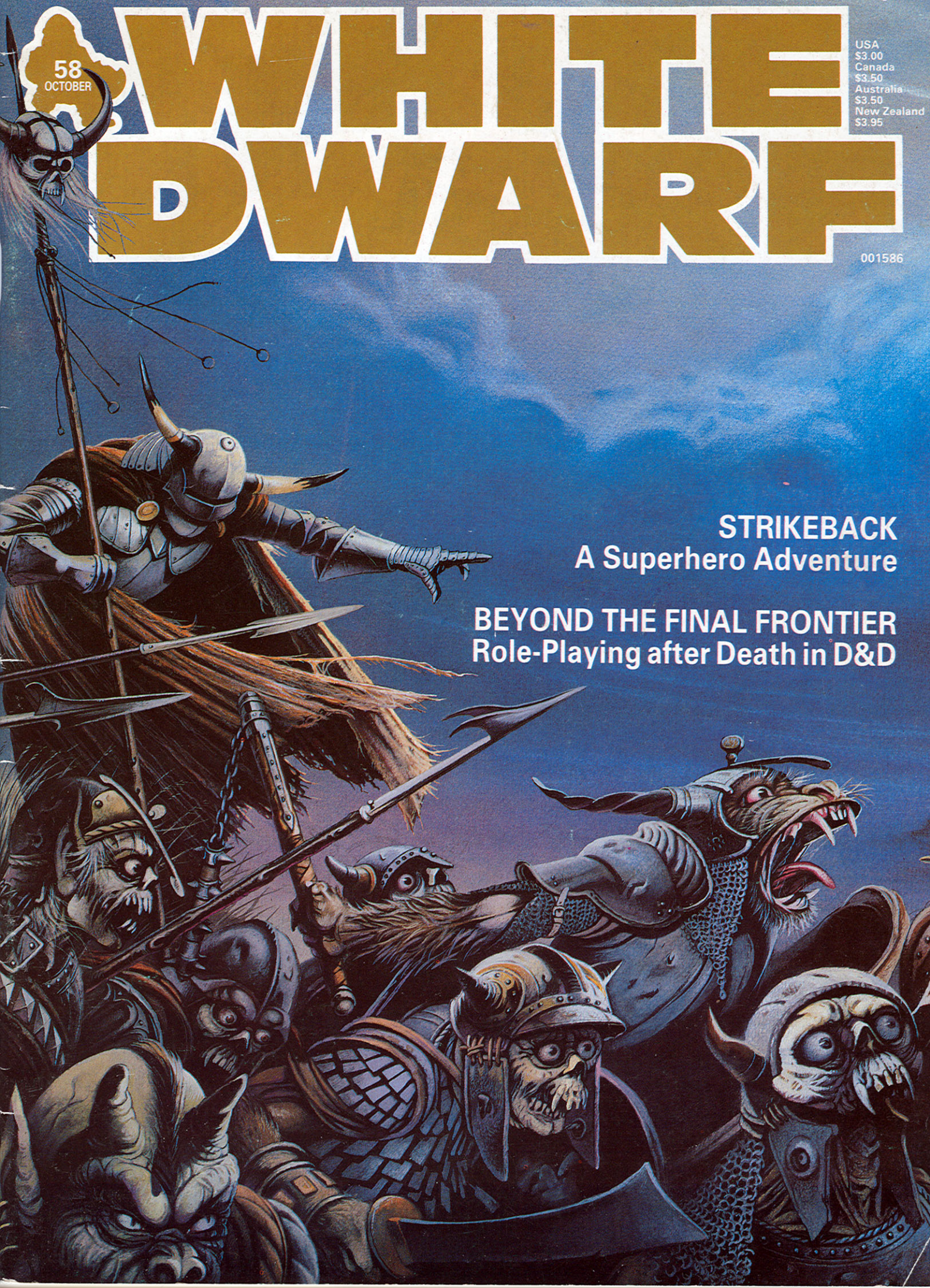
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STRIKEBACK
A Superhero Adventure

BEYOND THE FINAL FRONTIER
Role-Playing after Death in D&D



ACTS OF BLACK NIGHT: NINJUTSU FOR PLAYERS

*Acts of black night, abominable deeds,
Complots of mischief.*

Titus Andronicus V 1 64

Ninja Tactics

These were not based on brute force, but on the manipulation of an opponent by applied psychology. Even where physical force was used, the overall aim was always to mislead, confuse or frighten an opponent into doing the ninja's will.

Wherever possible, the ninja avoided direct confrontation, since the nature of their work involved operating in a hostile environment where they would face overwhelming forces if detected. The key to success was therefore thorough preparation, to ensure undetected entry and operation, and also to arrange a reliable means of escape afterwards. Hidden caches of equipment, food, and medicine allowed the ninja to operate for extended periods in enemy territory, and avoid dangerous contacts. Once a thorough initial reconnaissance had been carried out, the ninja could infiltrate using 'yo' or positive techniques, such as camouflage, or 'in', negative techniques, which involved working in the open, but in a disguised form, such as one of the 'seven ways of going'.

When operating in this way, the ninja often carried the *rokugu*, or 'six tools'. None were suspicious in themselves, but all could be turned to the ninja's purposes. They were; a short length of bamboo (*uchitake*), rope (*kaga nawa*), rain hat (*ami gasa*), stone pencil (*seki hitsu*), medicine (*kusuri*), and towel (*sanjaku tenugui*). A ninja could obtain employment with a temple as a caretaker or similar, and work to be transferred into the enemy lord's household; return disguised with defeated troops; or infiltrate as an attendant in a procession.

(Kunoichi, female ninja, favoured infiltration and seduction, but if you fancy a challenge many male ninja were, like Japanese actors, skilled female impersonators.) When operating 'openly' the ninja had to concentrate for most of the time on appearing to be no more than they were disguised as; a simple monk, a travelling musician, or any of the other covers they adopted. Sometimes such disguises became false identities, maintained for years on end. When infiltrating by stealth, however, or once they were free from observation, they could use any technique or equipment to achieve their aim.

Night was the friend of the ninja; night and foul weather. Driving rain, snow, and fog cut down sound and visibility, and even when these were not present, they would wait for moonless or cloudy nights, and a wind to move the leaves and grass and cover their passage. To ensure maximum night vision, the ninja might remain in darkness for up to 24 hours prior to the mission, hidden in a cave or hole in the ground. They would then pick a weak spot in the enemy's defences, such as an empty room or an avenue of approach considered impossible and thus lightly guarded, and also a psychological moment, such as the hours before dawn, or when guards were coming to the end of a watch and

This is the third and final part of our series on Ninjas in role-playing games.

NIGHT'S DARK AGENTS

Tactics & Strategy by Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards

starting to relax. *Crack!* Something in the camp fire explodes, scattering sparks and embers everywhere; the guard leaps up cursing and hopes that none have lodged in his armour. Spear held at the ready, he peers into the darkness, but can now see only the after-image of the fire, flashing as he blinks... A simple trick, designed to spoil a guard's night vision, but one that could be used to slip past sentries unobserved, or as a distraction to cover another ninja's entry elsewhere. Dogs and water fowl could betray the ninja when disturbed, and were usually poisoned, but frogs and the crickets between the stones of a wall fell silent instead, and needed a different solution. The ninja's skill as a *yogen* (chemist) provided substances which could be spread on the surface of a moat to make the frogs croak loudly for long enough to cover entry, and others which could perform a similar function with a cage of crickets carried as the wall was scaled. During sieges, the ninja were alleged to have used such exotica as the *yami doko* (kite in the darkness), a man-bearing kite, the *kito washi* (human eagle), a cloth and bamboo glider, and the *yagora*, a ferris wheel like machine that could drop a stream of ninja over a wall, but more stealthy approaches were usually favoured. A common entry was by water, and here the ninja could scatter duckweed on the surface, and move beneath the floating mass, breathing through a snorkel. Because of the very humid summer of Japan, buildings had false attics and underfloor spaces for ventilation, into which a ninja could slip, by dislocating limbs if necessary. They could also use the selection of saws, chisels, borers, keys and miniature hammers concealed in the pockets of their costume. Having previously established the location of a victim's *futon* (mattress), they could then be spared through the flimsy floorboards and matting. Such spaces, however, were often strung with threads linked to alarms, triggered when touched or cut. On entry, hinges and sliding doors would be lubricated with oil, water, or urine, to stop them squeaking, and the ninja would cover their mouth with their hood to

muffle breathing. Expert at detecting the non-random breathing and noises of feigned sleep, they also used the trick of sprinkling rice flour on a 'sleepers' face. Not enough to wake one really asleep, it would panic someone pretending, who would think they were the victim of some hideous ninja poison. Doors could be locked or jammed shut as the ninja moved through a building, to delay any pursuit.

On completion of a mission, or when detected, the ninja would have to make good an escape. Here, where they were often in view of pursuers, and always racing against time, their ninjutsu was tested to its limits. Much depended on how well preparations had previously been made. Using a springboard or vaulting pole, the ninja could apparently leap walls with a single bound, leaving guards stranded on the other side. Apparently trapped in a tree, they would slide along previously prepared ropes to safety. Ahead of the fleeing ninja is a river. Now he will be surrounded and cut down, or shot as he swims across. Except that he seems to hardly pause at the bank, and run across the water... A hidden ford, the location of the stones known only to the ninja that placed them, and changed from time to time. Guards could also be led through patterns of mines. (Yes, they did have land mines, called *uzume-bi*, and also grenades, called *nage-teppo*.) Smokescreens were also used, and sometimes these were poisonous. To buy time, caltrops would be scattered behind, or in emergencies thrown like shuriken. A wickedly neat ruse was to throw a sha-ken with a small length of spitting fuse attached. It wasn't a bomb or grenade, but few guards took the chance of finding out the hard way. Flash grenades blinded pursuers, and when they were recovered, the ninja would have disappeared. They might simply be a few feet away, curled into a ball, but pursuers were more likely to follow the noise made by another ninja, or assume from the splash of a large stone in the water that their quarry was making an escape elsewhere. How do you catch a sorcerer who can vanish into thin air? Seen in a corridor, a ninja would disappear, actually braced between walls and roof after a single acrobatic leap. Outdoors, they could sit on the bottom of ponds for hours, breathing through a snorkel, hang suspended from the branches of trees using their rope, or bury themselves in shallow 'earths' with only their mouths exposed. Even when trapped in a building which was then set alight to drive them out, they would hug the thin zone of breathable air just above the floor to avoid suffocation, far more dangerous than flames, and then use any available tools to break through the floor to bury themselves in the earth beneath. After their disappointed pursuers had consoled themselves with the thought of the agonising death they must have suffered, they would emerge to continue their work. In all that they did, one of the ninja's most powerful weapons was their reputation for occult powers, which they did nothing to dispel. Ahead of a guard, a stone lantern moves, becoming a terrifying demon breathing fire... *Onibi gakure*, the technique of wearing a demon mask and blowing fire from a tube. (For some idea

of what this must have looked like, try to catch the classic Japanese movie *Onibaba*, where a similar sort of trick is used.) Always remember, be tricky. As that great Occidental sage Bill Tidy once said, 'There's more ways of killing a cat than hitting it with a brick.'

DRAGONS IN THE WATER: NINJUTSU FOR REFEREES

One should be as a dragon lying hidden in the depths of the water; that is, carefully conserving one's energy while observing the progress of events and preparing to act when the right moment occurs.'

I Ching

There were three levels of ninja, the *jonin* (high man), *chunin* (middle man), and *genin* (low man). Ninja ryu (for game purposes the difference between ryu, schools or traditions, and the clans with which they were associated is not important) were organised on the classic cell structure, and although the *jonin* directed its activities, the *chunin* acted as cutouts, ensuring that the *genin* who actually did the dirty work were unable to betray his identity. Because of this structure, the role of *jonin* is an ideal one for a referee, serving much the same function as a Patron in *Traveller*. In theory, just as the *yakuza* (gangsters) sometimes acted like Robin Hoods rather than robbing hoods, so the *jonin* was concerned to restore the balance of society by aiding the oppressed, and this can be a useful source of scenarios. In practice, however, even when achieving such worthy aims, they were as subtle and devious, not to say unscrupulous, as ever. Different *ninja* could be assigned to the same mission without knowing, to avoid treachery, or so that only the *jonin* who received all their reports knew the true picture. In a variation on this ploy, each *genin* might be given part of a message which when put together would give them their orders. On occasions, a *ninja* could be given false information so that when captured and interrogated, they would mislead their captors. It also pays to remember that although we hope that most referees will play *jonin* as moral if ruthless patrons, that their real-life counterparts were quite prepared to accept, say, a contract to suppress a peasant revolt by arson and terror.

Organising the Ninja

Ninja ryu varied in size, but one of the most powerful, the Koga ryu, in the province of the same name, took in around 50 *chunin* families, each controlling 30-40 *genin*. Player characters should start as *genin*, although you may wish to eventually 'retire' senior characters from active service to become *chunin*, or even allow them to establish their own tradition, and become *jonin* of small ryu subsidiary to a more powerful one. Because the *ninja* were a separate caste (or out-caste) in Japanese society, the clan and ryu were immensely important to them. It is possible to have RPG *ninja* characters as freelance agents, but better for them to belong to a ryu, as this provides both a ready made background, support, and a source of scenarios through the missions players are given. The

Bushido rules already have a structure of six clans, A-F, friendly, neutral or hostile to each other. This is a good way of encouraging players to role-play, but hardly makes for scintillating dialogue when two *ninja* encounter one another on a mission. "Cran A?" "Iye, Cran F, *wakarimasu ka?*" followed by the zip of flying sha-ken, a groan and a thud. Instead of this, therefore, we have taken six actual ryu, whose special techniques are known. Choosing one of these will give a player a level of expertise or skills not available to other *ninja*, but means also that they may have to deal with hostile clans to obtain their services, equipment, poisons, etc. These are the six:

Togakure Ryu: Favoured the *tutsubishi* (caltrops) and *shuko*. These were climbing spikes worn across the palm of the hand. (Like the *nekode* in *Bushido*). The band around the hand was metal, and could be used to block sword cuts, giving rise to legends of *ninja* stopping blades bare handed. In *AD&D*, this can be treated as a skill giving a +1 to 'Effective Armour Class' for each level of expertise. For *Bushido*, treat as a 'Parry' option, with the further option of a 'Second Strike' attack or the 'Lightning Strike' *okuden* to represent a follow-up attack with the other hand.

Kyushin Ryu: Known for their unorthodox use of standard weapons, especially spears (*bisento*). Players and referees should use their imagination here, and allow a better chance of success when, say, throwing arrows.

Fudo Ryu: Specialists in *iai-jutsu* and *shuriken-jutsu*. Rather than restrict these techniques (or any others) to a particular ryu, it will probably be better to give a bonus reflecting greater practice and superior technique. Don't make this too generous, though, or you'll give an unfair advantage over other *ninja* or non-*ninja* characters.

Gyokku Ryu: Expert in *yubijutsu*, or nerve strikes. In *Bushido*, this can be treated as the 'Precision Strike' *okuden*, bare handed.

Koto Ryu: Users of *Koppojutsu*, bonebreaking technique. It is difficult to simulate this in *AD&D*, as hits are not taken on individual locations, but for this skill and *yubijutsu*, which could also disable limbs, you can opt to aim bare-handed attacks at limbs (except the head for *koppojutsu*) and then apply the Monk rules for stunning opponents. On a *koppojutsu* attack, the limb will be 'stunned' for only as many rounds as the level of the attacker, but also suffer the optional 1/2HP damage per level. In *Bushido*, treat *koppojutsu* as an *okuden* of *atemi-waza*, giving an increased chance of critical success, and then using the optional rule on broken limbs on p65 of Book 1. For example, an adjusted BCS of 15-24 normally scores a critical success on a roll of 1 or 2. Using this technique, that becomes 1, 2 or 3, and so on for higher BCSs. It can be used in both strike and grapple attacks.

Kusunoki Ryu: This ryu had a vast network of spies. They are therefore ideal for referees to use as a neutral 'NPC' clan, who operate as information brokers.

Each ryu should be friendly to one other (except the Kusunoki Ryu), neutral to the Kusunoki Ryu and one other, and hostile to two.

Ninja Strategy

Ninjutsu, properly practised, was far more than just esoteric combat techniques and gadgets. At its highest level, it used applied psychology to manipulate an opponent into doing the *ninja*'s will, preferably without being aware of it. Even the *genin* on a mission relied heavily on practical psychology to confuse, mislead, distract or frighten his enemy. This is the most difficult aspect of the art for a referee to come to grips with, and beyond the scope of this article to even begin to cover adequately. Even a basic appreciation of it, though, will help give your campaign and scenarios more depth and authenticity in respect of the *ninja*, and should make them more satisfying to play if your group is into anything more subtle than straight mayhem. Central to the teachings of *ninjutsu* was the concept of the 'five manifestations' of all things - Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Void. Everything, from overall strategy and espionage tactics to combat tactics and even combat postures, could be categorised in this way. The *ninja* classified their opponent's needs and weaknesses under these manifestations, and planned their strategy accordingly. For instance, an opponent whose personality operated mainly on the Water level was prone to anger and other strong emotions, and could be goaded into rash action. One whose emotions were on the more physical Earth level, on the other hand, was prone to laziness, and sought security. They could be discouraged, or distracted, as in the case of a guard, bribed, or manipulated by threatening their security. In game terms, what this means is simply that as 'jonin' you would design a scenario that encouraged players to study their target, and select a method of carrying out their contract that played on its weaknesses, or complemented an enemy's attack. It also means that you should not limit your or the player's strategies to direct assault. Although the *ninja* were famed (or infamous) assassins and commandos, they were also masters of espionage, and you should make good use of disguise, bribery, blackmail, misinformation, counter-espionage, hirelings, 'sleepers', double agents, and all the other trappings of the silent war.

FINAL NOTE

For scenarios you can incorporate as much or as little of the supernatural as you like. 'Genuine' magic could be used to counter the 'sorcery' of *ninjutsu* and the *Kuji-no-in*, but keep the effects on the same level; it's not much fun being a *ninja* if the resident castle Security wizard thinks that there's one in the bushes and flattens half an acre with a meteor strike just to be on the safe side. This series has covered a lot of ground, and some of it has had to be done very sketchily. We hope, however, that most of it has been new to most of you, and that it has succeeded in its aim of giving an insight into the approach to life that made the *ninja* and *ninjutsu* unique, and suggesting ways in which this can be introduced into role-playing games. □

Ore-no-shibori-wa doko-ni oitero yoku wakatterasu.

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY 85p



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THE NINJA
An AD&D Character Class

ON THE ROAD
A Scenario for RuneQuest



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HOUR OF THE TIGER

by Chris Elliott and
Richard Edwards

**A Scenario for
Ninja Characters of
Beginning Level,
using the guide-
lines in the series
Night's Dark
Agents.**

**For AD&D, players
should use the
ninja character
class presented
elsewhere in this
issue.**

*In all the turns of the combat,
never must one get controlled
by the enemy -
This is what is always to be
remembered.
Song of the Hozoin Zen school.*

INTRODUCTION

This scenario is a ninja mission, set in the Nippon of *Bushido*, but designed to be playable with any role-playing games system using the material in *Night's Dark Agents*, [WD56, 57 and 58 and the AD&D character class in this issue]. Having created characters, who should all be from the same ryu (school) of ninjutsu, and read the Player's Introduction below, players should then stop reading.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION
Nippon is at peace, but it is a fragile one that threatens to collapse at any moment. Five years ago, an alliance of Eastern daimyo (clan leaders) led by the Masanobu family succeeded in ensuring that their candidate was invited by the Emperor, Go-Masakado, to become Regent for his son, Myomitsu. Go-Masakado then abdicated, and retired to his country palace at Lake Hirosawa in Yamashiro province to become a Buddhist monk. Although Go-Masakado-in, as he is now known, has so far shown no inclination to follow the example of previous retired Emperors and 'advise' his son, the Masanobu have not overlooked the fact that the palace is close to the powerful Katsu-Butsu monastery at Mt Yasu, a perennial thorn in



their side, nor that the Western clans bitterly resent their domination and seek to end it...

REFEREE'S INTRODUCTION

The mission can be tackled in a number of ways, so we have divided the rest of the referee's material into three main sections; Running the Scenario, The Locations, and Non-Player Characters.

Running the Scenario

1. *Preparation.* Before doing anything with the players, make sure that you are familiar with the general layout of the palace and grounds. This scenario is not meant to be tackled in one go, but as three separate infiltrations. This is to give the players (and yourself) a couple of practice runs before the main mission, and allow them to conduct a thorough reconnaissance of the target. You should allow the players as much time as they need for preparation, as if this is not done properly, the scenario will be difficult for you to run, and frustrating for them to play. As well as choosing their point and method of entry, and the equipment they will take with them, they should also think about how they will prepare for their escape, how they will divide the mission between them, and how the guards will be dealt with. (In the first two sections of the mission, guards or servants should not be killed unless absolutely unavoidable, and then the bodies should be disposed of so that they will not be found. Even if this is done, a sudden disappearance will result in extra vigilance on the part of the guards.) Most importantly, they will need to think about what they will need to do to achieve their mission, and how this can be done. Do they go in together, or separately; does one map and the others guard; does one or more of them remain outside to cover an escape? What are their objectives, and what do they fall back on? Encourage them to discuss these sort of points thoroughly, it will be worth it.

2. *The Mission:* You can use this section more or less word for word, if you like, except for anything in brackets, which is for your eyes only.

Yasusada-sama, a vassal of the Masanobu, is to visit the retired Emperor to pay his respects in two or three weeks. What passes between them at their meeting must be known. Yasusada, although allied to the Masanobu, is suspected of being a go-between for the Western daimyo, who

are hoping to recapture power. It is thought they are trying to persuade Go-Masakado-in to come out of retirement to act as his son's advisor. Such an action would mean that their claim to be acting in the Emperor's interests by removing corrupt officials would be seen to have Imperial support. An agent has been planted in the household of Yasusada, and they will make their way to the palace along with Akihiro, Yasusada's chief retainer, and the rest of the advance party, in ten days time. On the night of that day, they will make their way to the tea pavilion on the eastern side of the palace grounds, and identify themselves to the agent with the phrase 'The moon in the cold stream like a mirror'. The mis-

colleagues, trussed up like a Christmas turkey! The ex-Emperor has a bodyguard of yamabushi (warrior monks) and Yasusada will bring his own samurai.

3. *The Game Plan.* The descriptions of the various locations are general rather than detailed. This is because in a multi-system scenario it would simply take too much space to give details for each one, and that there is no way of knowing exactly what details are worth putting in. This would vary from referee to referee. So, once you have briefed the players, and they have made their preparations, what do you do? For a start, make the players do a lot of the work. Once they have met with the agent, they will have a good general idea of what

a sliding door, you're entitled to have it squeak when they open it. It should be up to the players to make the running, enabling you to throw challenges at them if they look like becoming complacent. Don't go wild with this, as too many wandering guards or servants could lead to the mission going up in smoke, and the idea is to encourage them to think their way through rather than to kill them off. Always be prepared to call a time out, and let them discuss their next move. General points: there are no windows as such, light coming in through shoji, or sliding doors with translucent panels. Underfloor and roof spaces in the palace are rigged with threads linked to bells, and the threads must be found and cut to avoid setting off the alarms. Entry to the roof space is easiest through small openings, two or three along each wall. These are barred, and in any case getting through them will involve use of nawanukejutsu (dislocation of limbs). Weather conditions for the first two parts should be cloudy, with a light wind, but for the final part, the night will be still with a full moon and no clouds. (Heh heh).

4. *Mapping.* As you can see, the rooms are marked into squares corresponding to their size in tatami, or mats. Two squares are equal to one mat, so you can therefore describe a room as being so many mats in size, and if necessary sketch out the layout. The palace is too large and complicated for players to map in detail, but they should aim to get a good idea of the layout and general size of rooms. The fact that Japanese rooms were all standardised around the size of mats means that players can tell the exact size of a room without having to measure it.

5. *Patrols.* A number of buildings in the grounds are being used as guard posts. The routes taken from these by patrols are marked on the map of the grounds. Generally speaking, guards will patrol in twos at fairly regular intervals, but there will always be one at each post. If there is reason for suspicion you can have more guards, more frequent patrols, and other changes. Both gates are well guarded. In effect, the number of guards available can be considered to be unlimited.

LOCATIONS

The Gardens (Map 1). The wall around the palace is 12' high, with ridge tiles along its top. The moat is fairly shallow, about 4'-5', and 6' wide, but >



sion thus has three phases; entry to the grounds and the rendezvous with the agent, a reconnaissance of the palace, and eavesdropping on the meeting between Emperor and daimyo. Absolute secrecy is essential until the mission succeeds or is exposed. If discovered, the genin (player characters) will have to make their escape as best they can. If successful, they should 'make their presence known' on the way out to act as a warning to Yasusada that he is under suspicion. Make sure that the players know the retired Emperor, Son of Heaven is strictly off limits. Any actual or attempted violence toward the retired Emperor will result in the offending party being left outside the main gate by his own

the layout of the buildings and grounds is, which will stop you having to act as a talking guidebook all the time. The plans you have to work from are detailed enough to give most of the information you will need to know on what goes on where, and the identity of individual rooms. Your most important role, though, will be to respond to what the players do, and fill in the details as necessary. If they approach the mission intelligently, things should go fairly smoothly for them. If a player wants to sneak in somewhere unseen, and lets you know that their character is doing all the right things, it is unfair for them to fail because the dice say so. On the other hand, whatever the dice say, if someone forgets to lubricate

MAP 1: THE PALACE GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS

KEY

- 1: Gate for the Emperor
- 2: Inner Gate
- 3: Ordinary Gate
- 4: Palace Buildings
- 5: Guard House
- 6: Sentry Post
- 7: Tea Pavilion
- 8: Sentry Post
- 9: Guard House
- 10: House Temple
- 11: Barracks
- 12: Boat House
- 13: Store Houses

-  Stone Wall
-  Bridge
-  Tree
-  Building
-  Water
-  Routes of Guards
-  Routes of Guards

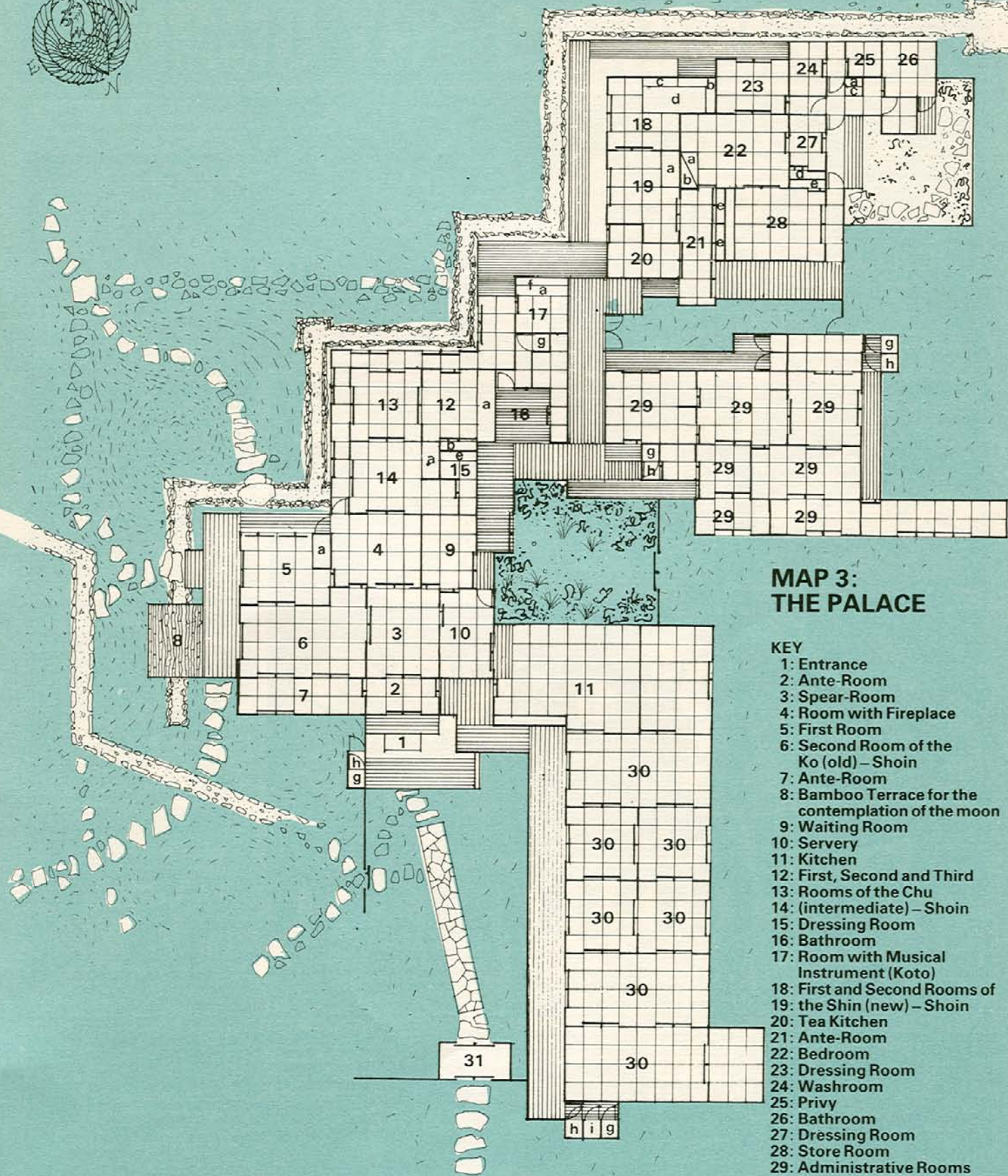


MAP 2: THE TEA PAVILION (Called Shokintei – 7 on Map 1)

KEY

- 1: First Room
 - 2: Open Tea-Kitchen
 - 3: Second Room
 - 4: Tea-Room
 - 5: Ante-Room
 - 6: Ante-Room
 - 7: Tea-Kitchen
 - 8: Kitchen
 - 9: Inner Court
- a: Tokonoma (picture recess)
 - b: Tana (wall shelves)
 - c: Wall Cupboard
 - d: Fire place with Wall Cupboard above
 - e: Fire place for Tea Ceremony
 - f: Wall Shelves
 - g: Stone Water Basin
 - h: Stone Lantern





**MAP 3:
THE PALACE**

KEY

- 1: Entrance
- 2: Ante-Room
- 3: Spear-Room
- 4: Room with Fireplace
- 5: First Room
- 6: Second Room of the Ko (old) – Shoin
- 7: Ante-Room
- 8: Bamboo Terrace for the contemplation of the moon
- 9: Waiting Room
- 10: Servery
- 11: Kitchen
- 12: First, Second and Third
- 13: Rooms of the Chu
- 14: (intermediate) – Shoin
- 15: Dressing Room
- 16: Bathroom
- 17: Room with Musical Instrument (Koto)
- 18: First and Second Rooms of
- 19: the Shin (new) – Shoin
- 20: Tea Kitchen
- 21: Ante-Room
- 22: Bedroom
- 23: Dressing Room
- 24: Washroom
- 25: Privy
- 26: Bathroom
- 27: Dressing Room
- 28: Store Room
- 29: Administrative Rooms
- 30: New Waiting Rooms
- 31: Inner Gate



- Single Sliding Door
- Double Sliding Door
- Hinged Door
- Boarded Floor (usually veranda or corridor)
- Stone Step
- Stone Path
- Raised Stone Path

- a: Tokonoma (picture recess)
- b: Tana (wall shelves)
- c: Shoin (bay reading window)
- d: Platform
- e: Wall-Cupboard
- f: Built-in Seat
- g: Privy
- h: Washroom
- i: Bathroom



▷ the banks slope steeply and add another 6' to this. The depth of water in the lakes and streams is variable, but always deep enough to cover someone lying flat. Apart from the section near the palace, which consists of lawns and moss gardens, the grounds are rustic with plenty of shrubs and mature trees.

The Tea Pavilion (Map 2). The agent in the advance party is in fact a kunoichi (female ninja) posing as a courtesan called Yuko, who has accompanied Mangara Naotaka, one of Yasusada's personal guards. Although seldom if ever alone, she has managed to make a sketch map of the palace and grounds, which is concealed in the design on the fan she carries. Unable to move alone outside without arousing suspicion, she has persuaded Naotaka, (who is infatuated with her) to take her to the tea pavilion for an informal tea ceremony. Their liaison is already frowned upon, and use of the Imperial pavilion by a commoner is scandalous, so several of Naotaka's samurai are posted at the bridges leading to the pavilion to warn of anyone approaching. Having served tea in the inner tea room (Room 4) Yuko will retire with Naotaka to Room 1, while her maids wait in Room 3. She will play the koto, and sing a song whose refrain is:

*The moon in the cold stream
like a mirror,
The image left behind a
shadow of its glory.*

This refers to her fan, which she has left behind in the tea room. You may have to drop hints to ensure the players realise she is without a fan, and put two and two together, but don't make it too easy. To show how the coded map comes out, draw a freehand map, giving a rough indication of the relationship of the various parts of the palace, and the layout of the grounds, but not too much detail. She has also left a message on the fan to say that she will try to find out when and where the meeting with the Emperor is to take place. This means that as well as reconnoitering the palace, they now have to find her room, which is one of those in the new waiting rooms (30). (See map of palace).

The Palace (Map 3). Most of the layout is self explanatory. The Emperor's quarters are in the rooms marked 4, 5, 6 and 12-27. His bodyguard of

yamabushi are in the section of rooms marked 29, and Yasusada's party are in the rooms marked 30. Careful reconnaissance will reveal the general layout, although going via roof or underfloor spaces will only give clues if the rooms below or above are occupied. Most samurai and yamabushi will be asleep when the ninja go in, but you can have a few awake, gambling, praying, or shifting on guard duty, to make sure nobody stumbles into a room full of armed men unaware. When Yuko is found, she will tell the players that Yasusada has been granted the unusual honour of being invited by the ex-Emperor to view the moon with him from the platform outside his rooms marked 8. This will take place in two

to find his reasons for coming.)

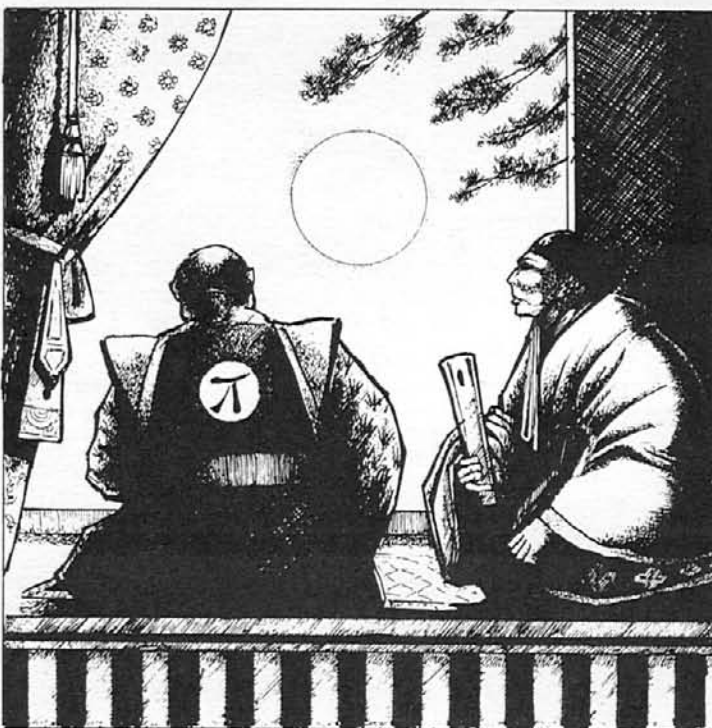
Yasusada:
*There is no village where the moon does not shine,
But it is clear in the hearts of enlightened men.*

(The Emperor, the moon, is revered by all, but only the pure and enlightened can carry out his will properly.)

Go-Masakado-in:
*The moon's reflection is deep in the lake,
Yet you can carry it away in a dipper
If your hand is steady.*

(I will give you my support if I can be sure that you are trustworthy and have firm support from other daimyo.)

Yasusada:
*The pine has no voice,
But in the Western wind it sings.
(I speak on behalf of the Western daimyo.)*



nights time, on the night of the full moon, at the hour of the tiger, an auspicious hour (about 4am). A heavy guard will be posted, but at a discreet distance. Being 'only a simple monk now', the Son of Heaven will serve tea, and then they will view the moon. The conversation until then is only small talk, but, under cover of composing impromptu verses, they will begin to discuss the matter in hand. The key verses, along with their meanings, are given below.

Go-Masakado-in:
*On the surface of Hirosawa lake the mist is thick.
What is floating and what is sinking
No man knows.*

(There is little mist, the ex-Emperor is probing Yasusada

Go-Masakado-in:
*In the branches of the pine the moon is seen,
But in the lake it shines unbroken.*

(I will support your action, but the Emperor himself must not become directly involved.)

A bargain has therefore been struck. Hints, such as the moon Emperor image, should help the players understand the verse.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

We haven't given detailed statistics apart from those in the section on patrols, but they shouldn't be necessary. The object is not to fight the samurai and yamabushi, although some can be wasted on the way out. Their basic function is to provide obstacles for the players to avoid, and to harrass. If the players

prepare well, they should avoid direct encounters. The odd guard or servant wandering about will help keep them alert during the mission, but only if they get into a fight should large numbers start turning out. Even then, be sure to leave an escape route, and chase the players out, rather than cornering and destroying them. Use as many guards as you need to do this, and have them act intelligently rather than queueing up to be zapped. (Remember, spears can be used through paper walls.)

In AD&D, have samurai guards as 1st and 2nd level fighters wearing scale mail and helmet, and armed with spear and bastard sword (katana). There should be fewer yamabushi, but these will be 2nd and 3rd level monks using halberds (naginata). Naotaka and Akihiro should be 6th and 7th level fighters respectively if they need to appear.

In RuneQuest, the guards should have skills of about 40-50% in bastard sword and long spear, heavy scale armour on chest and arms, and open helms. Yamabushi should have 50-60% skills with pole axe (naginata), and Naotaka and Akihiro will have 80-90% skills in bastard sword, and have had time to don full armour. NPCs should not have any battle magic. Servants and other non-combatants are there to panic and get in everybody's way.

In Bushido, guards can be first level classic bushi, and have Armour Class 6 armour. Yamabushi will follow the rules on page 8 of Book 2 of the rules. Naotaka and Akihiro should be 5th and 6th level Bushi, with Armour Class 7 armour.

Experience Points

Bushido ninja using this scenario will accumulate Budo according to how well they tackle it. RuneQuest players can use the breaks between the parts of the mission to see if they have learned from experience. AD&D players will have few combat opportunities, but as DM you should award small amounts of experience points each time a skill is used successfully or a player has a good idea. (Don't be too generous, but award a few points fairly frequently.) Bonus points can be awarded for especially good ideas or role-playing, and for solving the puzzles in the scenario. Players completing each stage of the mission successfully should also receive a bonus. □

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ENTERTAINERS



Travelling entertainers were a large part of Japan's culture; they travelled extensively spreading culture as they went. Although not usually central to heroic Japanese literature, they do offer an interesting alternative profession for **Bushido** Gamemasters and players alike.

Bonus Skills

All of the following are Bonus Skills for Entertainers:

Bugei:

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Jojutsu | Jujutsu |
| Kamajutsu | Karumijutsu |
| Shinobi-jutsu | Shurikenjutsu |
| Sumai | Tantojutsu |

Fine Arts:

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Acting | Japanese Classics |
| Court Dance | Popular Dance |
| Composition | All Instrument Skills |
| Painting | Poetry |
| Rhetoric | |

Ki Powers

Ki powers available to the Entertainers are as follows:

Please Audience: A Focussed Power. The Entertainer can increase the On and amount of coinage gained for a performance by his effect number. The current Ki score is reduced by the Effect Number used.

Misdirect: A Focussed Power. The Entertainer can impose distractions on anybody. This can be used in combat or when attempting to perform a hidden action. In the case of an attempting hidden action the effect number is subtracted from the WIT ST of the victim. The distractions imposed are equal to half the Effect Number of the Focussing roll if used against Player Characters, or the full number Effect Number against Non-Player Characters. In combat the target saves against Distractions in the usual manner. The current Ki is reduced by the Effect Number used.

Memory: The Entertainer's Ki is used as a BCS to remember a very impressive line of poetry, apt quotation, stunning riposte, etc. The GM should ensure that use of this power does contribute to the game in a real fashion and the furtherance of the character's ends. For example, a suitable quotation may be enough to sway the Daimyo from an execution ordered in a moment of anger.

Performances

Performances can be of two kinds: improvised, impromptu exhibitions, usually given by the roadside; or planned, rehearsed dramas performed in a theatre or home.

Roadside performances: These gain On and copper pieces equal to the effect number of the appropriate art.

Theatre performances: These are performances of pieces that have to first be learnt. The Gamemaster must assign a Task Point value to specific works. These Task Points can be accumulated daily by the entertainer, with the appropriate skill or averaging of skills. For example, a piece of Noh Drama might have 100 Task Points to be accumulated using Acting and Court Dance averaged. The Biwa part of the same drama will probably have 50 Task Points to be accumulated with the Biwa. Individual dramas, and various parts in them, must be learned separately.

These performances once learned can be performed at any time. They will earn the entertainer(s) money and On as follows:
((Total Task Points required/100) + Total Effect Numbers of Performers) x Level of Leader of Troupe in copper pieces.

They do, however cost money to stage. This equals the Total of Performers' Levels in Copper pieces.

The Gamemaster may also wish to impose an arbitrary amount for the hiring of the theatre, between 1 and 5 Silver pieces is normal.

Sleight of Hand: Entertainers can palm small objects, etc. with a Deftness Saving Throw. The effect number, positive or negative, is subtracted from the viewer's WIT ST. The viewers only get a ST if they are watching the entertainer closely to try and see how it is being done.

Budo For Entertainers

Budo is earned from combat as usual, as well as from performances.

Roadside performances earn Budo equal to .1 x the Level of the Entertainer.

Theatre performances earn Budo equal to .5 x the Level of the Entertainer.

Sleight of Hand earns Budo equal to the Level of the Entertainer if used to advance him significantly in the campaign, otherwise it earns him .1 x his Level in Budo.

Professional Summary Table (Addition)

Entertainer

Initial Skills

Acting;

Choice of two from: Court Dance, Popular Dance, Japanese Classics, Composition, Biwa, Fue, Hichiriki, Kot, Samisen, San-Ko, Painting, Poetry and Rhetoric;

Choice of one Practical Art;

Choice of two Bugei.

Initial Goods:

A weapon for each Bugei

Notes:

Buke choosing this Profession lose half their Initial On.

Attribute Modifiers

| | |
|-----|-----|
| STR | +5 |
| DFT | +10 |
| SPD | +10 |
| HLH | +0 |
| WT | +10 |
| WL | +0 |

Hit Point Die

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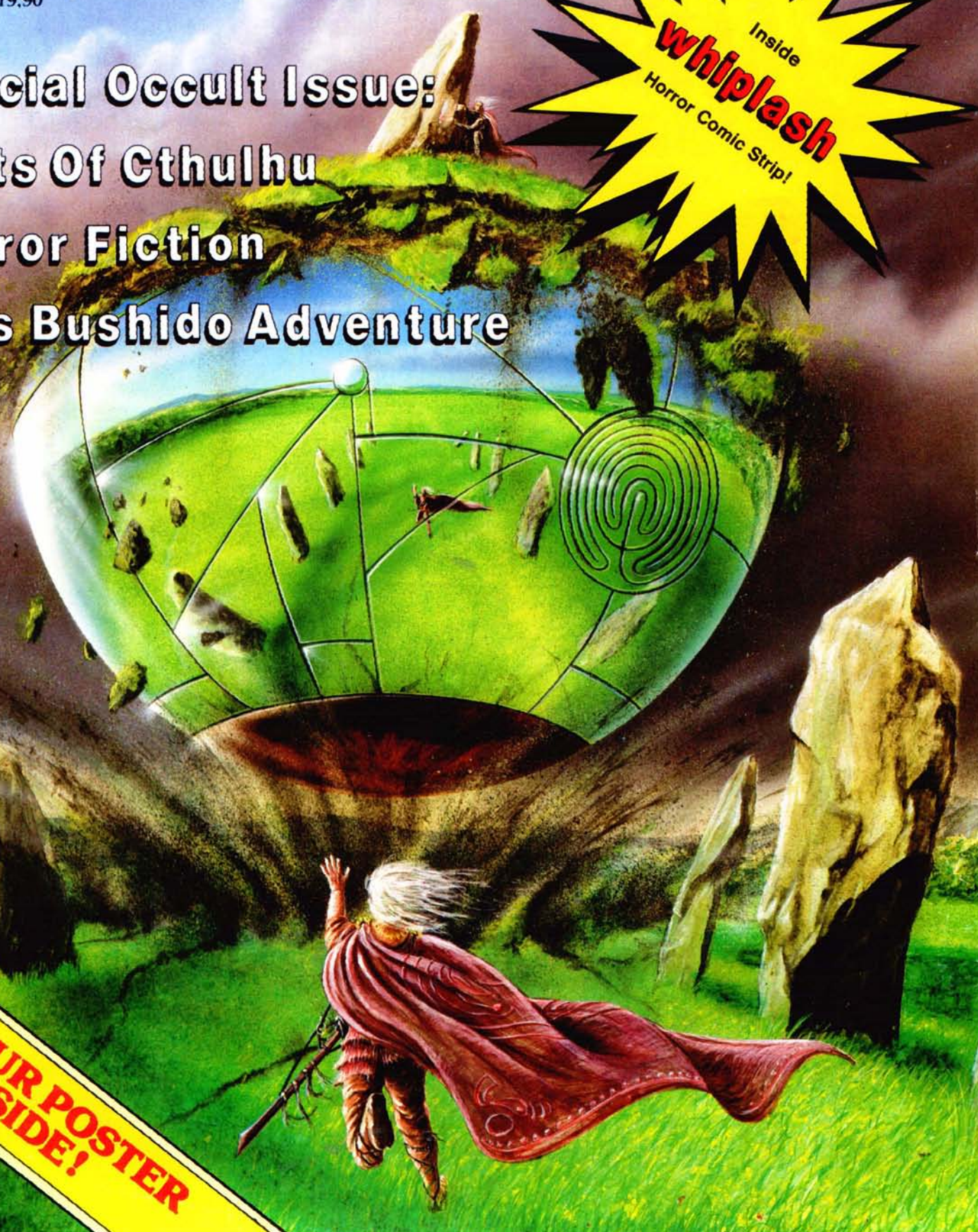
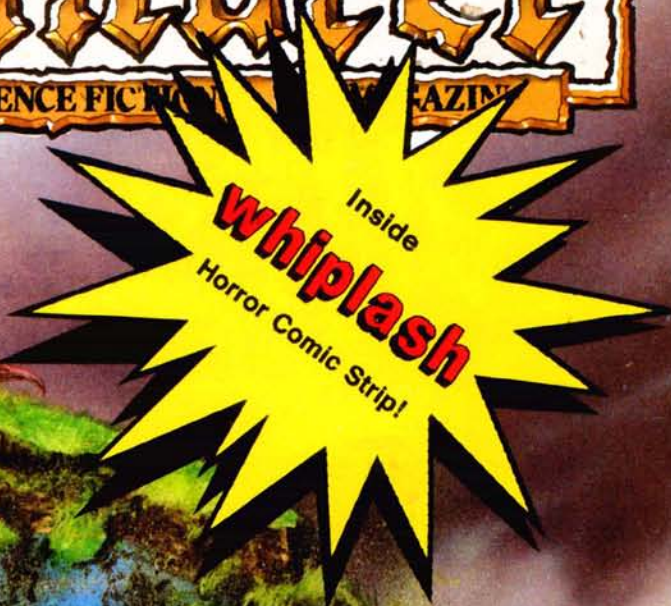


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THE GREAT EASTERN LANDS OF THE EAST



- AKITA
- MORIOKA
- ICHI-MONE
- WUTSU
- DEMU
- HACHIMURA
- KAWABUCHI
- OKASAKI
- TAKAGI

THE GREAT EASTERN LANDS OF THE EAST

The Okazaki Clan:

Status Factor : 0.8

Head : Okazaki Keilchi

Area Controlled : see map

Allied Clans : Hagiwara, Kawaguchi, others

Friendly Clans : Aoki, Takagi, and allied clans

Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province

Mon : A Stylised Cherry Blossom

The Takagi Clan:

Status Factor : 0.6

Head : Takagi Azuma

Area Controlled : see map

Allied Clans : Kawaguchi, others

Friendly Clans : Aoki, Hagiwara, Okazaki, Takagi, and allied clans

Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province

Mon : Four Commas arranged in a circle with their heads not touching

Other Clans:

Status Factor : 0.5

Area Controlled 6: see map

Allied Clans : one of the 'Big Five', other than Kawaguchi, and that clans allies

Friendly Clans : Most others in Dewa province

Hostile Clans : (rarely) one or two of the smaller clans in Dewa province

Yakuza in Dewa Province

There is no province-wide Yakuza organisation in Dewa. However, the underground is active in Akita and its environs, despite suppression by the Okazaki Clan. Other Oyabun control criminal activity in the rural areas.

Ninja in Dewa Province

Ninja activity in the province falls under the sway of the **Clan of the Night Hawks** (clan F), whose base is actually located in Mutsu province. Because of the generally quiet political situation in the province, the Night Hawks are going through a lean period; only contracts from Mutsu province are keeping them in business. (The referee, if he feels it necessary, may decide the exact location and make up of the Night Hawks' base.)

The City of Akita

Akita is the principal seat of power of the Okazaki clan and so serves as the capital of Dewa province. It is a 'D' class city of about 10000 souls. The city is guarded by a level 4 citadel which has a usual garrison of 2000 warriors (Okazaki Samurai and Ashigaru).

Temples in Akita include **Aiki-o-Tera** (the temple of divine harmony), a class 'D' temple of normal orientation, and **Sango-o-Tera** (the coral temple), a contemplative temple of class 'E'. One of the most notable Shinto shrines in Akita is **Kensei-Jinga** (the shrine of the Sword-Saint), dedicated to the Kami of a famous Okazaki samurai, Takashi.

The Okazaki clan runs a class 'B' martial school, **Sakura-Kwajuen-Ryu** (the cherry orchard school; a cherry blossom is the mon of the clan), which will accept any Bushi as a pupil, but will give preference to the members of the Okazaki and allied clans. A (class 'E') specialist school of interest is **Denko-Kogeki-Ryu** (the lightning thrust school), run by the Ronin Hoso-

tami Yutaka, who teaches Sojutsu with piercing Thrust Okuden.

Katsumushi-o-Tera (The Dragonfly Temple)

The Dragonfly or 'Tonbo', was often known as Katsumushi (insect of victory), and was admired by samurai for its warlike appearance. It was thus chosen as the emblem for this (class 'C') Yamabushi temple and martial school.

Abbot : Hidezuki Tetsuaki

Sensei : Terazawa Otake

Staff : Fujio, Hisakazu, Eguchi Ryuchi, Shoichi, Terazawa, Takeyujii, Yutaka

Available Skills :

see character descriptions

Associated Village : Class 'F', Level 'C'

Temple Troops :

225 LEVEL '1 Yamabushi

(level 1 Bushi / Level 1 Gakusho)

75 LEVEL '2 Yamabushi

(level 2 Bushi / Level 1 Gakusho)

15 Officers (level 3 Bushi / Level

1D2 Gakusho)

Commander : Otake-Sensei

Notes :

The temple is well known for the high standard of its tuition; all study here is at a bonus of 1 to the learning rate. If accepted as students, Buddhist Gakusho and pious laymen can expect a reduction in fees of up to 50%. The chance of any Shinto characters being taken on as a student is reduced by 10%, and fees may be increased by up to 50%. Friends, retainers, etc. of students will be accommodated in the village for a reasonable fee.

Map & House plans

The map shows the general disposition of buildings in the temple grounds.

Plans of some of the buildings are shown in detail. The referee should decide which rooms are used for what purpose(s) by the people in each household, especially which rooms are used at night. Terazawa Otake-Sensei and Eguchi Ryuchi are likely to have at least one room where guests or important students may sleep. If a student is of particularly high rank (eg. Samurai), Fujio's house (presently occupied by Shoichi and Yutaka) may be given over to him.

A) Terazawa Otake-Sensei's House.

B) The Abbots House

(currently occupied by Fujio).

C) The Students Building;

This contains dormitories and a number of apartments for students and staff, as well as ancillary rooms (kitchen, bath, etc.). At any time there will be 4x5 students at the temple. **Hisakazu**, the Budoka, is the only member of staff whose quarters are in this building; two other apartments have recently been vacated by Shoichi and Yutaka.

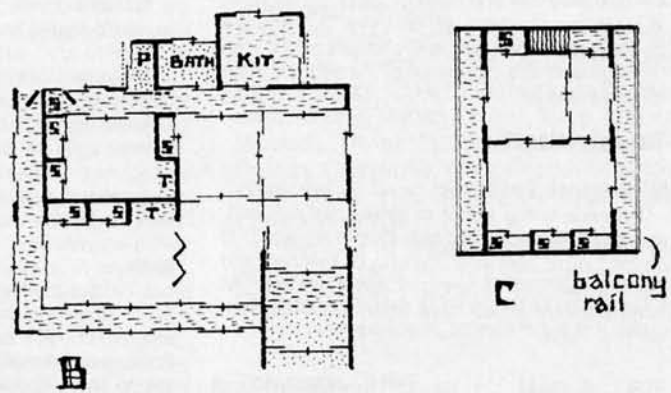
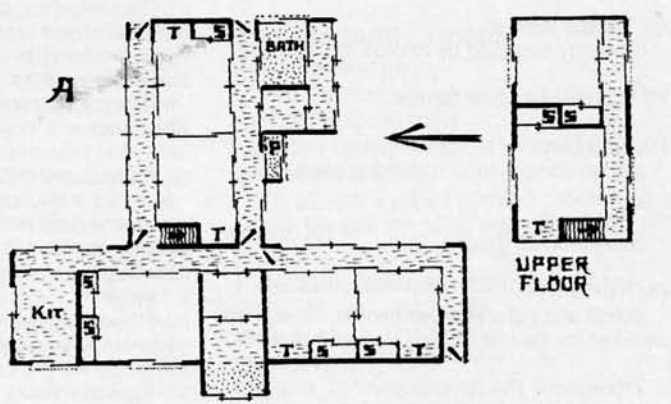
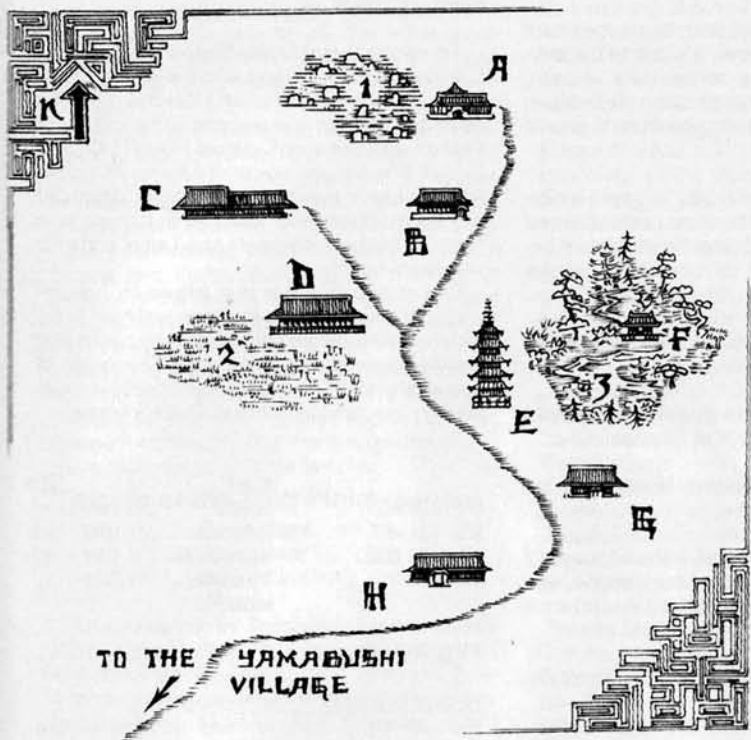
D) The Dojo

is a large single story building where martial skills are taught and Kata (exercises) may be performed; sometimes martial training takes place in the temple grounds. In a Tokonoma (alcove) in the main hall is a statue of Gundari-Myoo to remind all students that their martial skills should not be used for evil ends.

E) The Pagoda

contains three halls and a smaller number of rooms for the instruction of students. The representation in the principal hall is of the Amida Buddha. In the other halls are representations of the Jizo Bosatsu in his manifest forms as Jizo of Victory and Jizo of Demons (an exceptionally fine carving in red Jade). The rooms in upper (second) floor are currently occupied by the

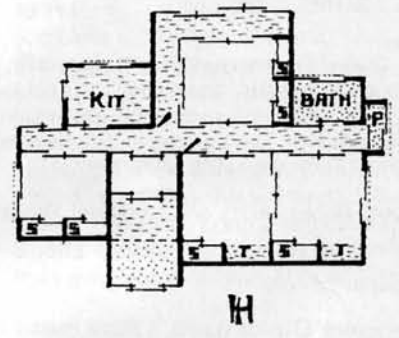
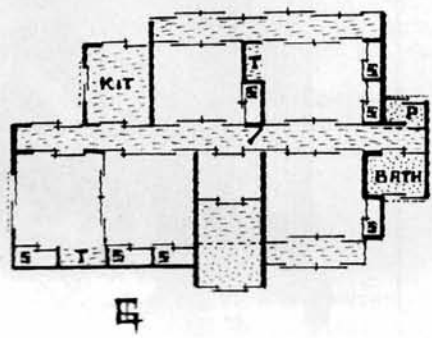




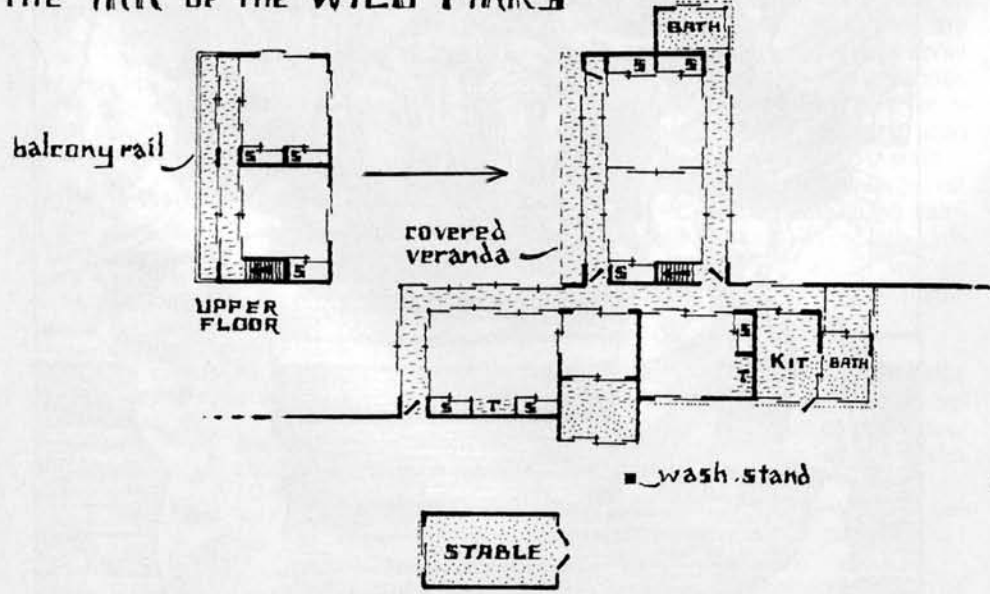
KATSUMUSHI-O-TERA THE DRAGONFLY TEMPLE

KEY

- WOODEN WALL
- DOUBLE SLIDING DOOR
- SINGLE SLIDING DOOR
- HINGED WOODEN DOOR
- WINDOW + WOODEN SHUTTERS
- S STORAGE CUPBOARD
- T TOKONOMA
- P PRIVY
- Kit KITCHEN
- BARE WOOD
- PACKED EARTH



THE INN OF THE WILD PINKS



abbot, Hidezumi Tetsuaki.

G) Fujio's House

(currently occupied by Shoichi & Yutaka).

H) Eguchi Ryuchi's House.

- (1) Kare-Sansui
garden composed of rocks and sand
- (2) Hira-Niwa
(level ground) garden.
- (3) Rin-Sen
(forest and water) garden behind; F] is a tea pavillion for the use of both staff and students.

Throughout the temple grounds are small ponds occupied by Turtles and Golden Carp. Because of recent events, the temple grounds are patrolled day and night by 2xd3 Yamabushi, at least one of whom will be Level '2. They will be typically armed with a Wakizashi and a Yari or Naginata; the higher level Yamabushi may have a Katana.

Temple Staff:

Hidezumi Tetsuaki (level '5 Gakusho)
Tetsuaki is the abbot of Katsumushi-o-Tera, as was his father before him. Due to his age (77) he no longer performs the role of teacher, and devotes himself to spiritual advancement. All administrative duties have fallen to Otake-Sensei and Fujio.

STR :6 DAM : -1 **Capabilities** MAGIC : 13
 DFT : 25 BAP : 12 BRAWL : 7 POWER : 84
 SPD : 23 MNA : 2 CLIMB : 12 KI : 9
 HLH : 10 ZAN : 3 LEAP : 11
 WIT : 32 BMA : 8 SWIM : 4
 WIL : 36 HPT : 18

Skills:
All yogas (19); Buddhist Theology (19); Chinese classics (19); Meditation (19); Physician (17); Sacred Dance (17); Divination (16); Bojutsu (15); Tea Ceremony (15); Naginata-Jutsu (12); Rhetoric (12); Calligraphy (11)

Armour: Robes (AC1) or Ceremonial Robes (AC2)

Weapons: Bo only

Terazawa Otake (Level '5 Bushi / Level '2 Gakusho)

Otake-Sensei is the master of martial training in the temple and the commander of the Yamabushi. His elder son, Takeyuji, is also a teacher in the temple and an officer of the Yamabushi.

STR :27 DAM : +2 **Capabilities** MAGIC : 5
 DFT : 30 BAP : 15 BRAWL : 8 POWER : 34
 SPD : 25 MNA : 3 CLIMB : 10 KI : 3
 HLH : 25 ZAN : 3 LEAP : 13
 WIT : 8 BMA : 8 SWIM : 9
 WIL : 17 HPT : 48

Skills:
Kenjutsu (19) with reverse cut Okuden (13); Iaijutsu (19); Ni-to-Kenjutsu (19); Sojutsu (19) with piercing thrust Okuden (12); Sumai (17); Naginata-Jutsu (16); Karma-Yoga (15); Kyu-Jutsu (15); Yadome-Jutsu (15); Chinese Classics (14); Tea ceremony (14); Hawking (12); Senjo-Jutsu (12); Buddhist Theology (11); Hatha-yoga (8)

Armour: Kimono and Hakama (AC1); Samurai Style Armour of AC6 available.

Weapons: Dai-sho (Katana & Wakizashi) normally worn as commander of the Yamabushi; Bokken (used with Kenjutsu, doing damage as a Jo) often carried; No-dach, Yari, Naginata, and Dai-Kyu (3 Man) available

Other Staff :

The remaining six staff are classic members of their stated professions. It is left to the individual referee to decide on the skills of each, and thus on the full range of tuition available in the temple, but the following comments should be noted.

Fujio (Level 4 Gakusho) has achieved a high standard in his study of the chinese classics and is well versed in the I-Ching; he has lately become involved in the administration of the temple.

Hisazaku (Level 3 Budoka) specialises in the use of Okinawan weapons.

Eguchi Ryuchi (Level 4 Bushi) is a master of Onojutsu with smashing blow Okuden.

Shoichi (Level 3 Gakusho) is noted for his skill in Tenyaku and Igaku.

Terazawa Takeyuji (Level 3 Bushi / Level 2 Gakusho) was trained in Kenjutsu, Iaijutsu, and Sojutsu by his father, but has lately shown a greater aptitude for religious studies.

Yutaka (Level 3 Gakusho) is a master of Za-Zen meditation.

Note:
All of the staff will normally wear AC1 robes, gi, or kimono about the temple. Samurai style armour of AC4 or better is available for the Bushi, and all staff will have weapons appropriate to their Bugei. Ryuchi and Hisakazu are

pious buddhists.

Terazawa Suza, Otake-Sensei's Wife
Unknown to all but Otake and the Abbot, Suza-san is, in fact, a (five-tailed) Kitsune. She has been an excellent spouse, and is the mother of Otake's younger son, Takejuni (level '1 Classic Bushi). She has the power of Kitsune-Momoku, and can cast 6 spells of the School of Wood per day as a Shugenja of Level 4. In human form she may fight with Naginata and Tanto, and may use Atemi-waza.

She may betray her true nature by her unusual fondness for Egg-Noodles and fried Tofu, for which Kitsune are notorious, or by her having a shrine (kawi-dana) to Inari, the Shinto god of rice with whom Kitsune are traditionally associated, in her 'private' room in Otake's house.

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|----------|-------|
| | Attack | : 18 | : 2D6 |
| BAP : 30 AC | : 3 BiteBCS | : 15 DAM | : +3 |
| MNA : 3 HPT | : 33 Tanto-Jutsu | : 11 DAM | : +3 |
| ZAN : 3 BUDO | : 6 Naginata-Jutsu | : 10 DAM | : +3 |
| BMA : 7 | Atemi-Waza | : 13 DAM | |
| | Magic BCS | | |

The Adventure:

Recent events at Katsumushi-o-Tera:
Katsumushi-o-Tera is held in high regard throughout northern Honshu. It's presence in the territory of the Kawaguchi Clan and that clan's patronage of the temple have greatly contributed to the prestige of the Kawaguchi. However, recent events are threatening the standards of the temple and thus the Kawaguchi



clan is in danger of losing face before the other major clans in Dewa province. Due to the sensitive political situation in the province this could have far reaching consequences--perhaps even civil war!

Though more pious than most, the Yamabushi of Katsumushi-o-Tera still enjoy a 'good time' and often frequent the inns and tea houses of nearby villages where, until now, they have always been welcome. In recent months there have been various incidents, such as violent brawls and thefts, involving one member or another of the temple. Most serious of all (and most recent) is the murder of a courtesan of high rank, at the Inn of the Wild Pinks. When questioned, the mama-san was quite adamant that the girl's last customer was a Dragonfly Yamabushi who called himself Kaoru. Fujio has claimed--truthfully!--that there is no-one of that name associated with the temple.

The Inn of the Wild Pinks (see plan)

*To lie drunk
on cobbles
bedded in Pinks
-Basho*

This inn is run by **Tamiaki**, a Level 2 classic Yakuza Rabble. As the name might suggest (wild pinks are Joro-hana, the courtesan's flowers) the inn can provide the services of a number of geisha. The Mama-San, Kiku, is a Level 3 geisha. There is also a dice game available; the 'croupier' is a female Level 1 Yakuza Rabble, Yoshio. Meals, Tea, Sake, and overnight accommodation are also available at reasonable prices.

Because of recent events, characters who admit to being connected with Katsumushi-o-Tera will not be well received, even if they do claim to be in pursuit of the murderer.

Getting Involved

Because of the killing, the Kawaguchi Clan has decided that it must intercede; (before, they were willing to let the temple deal with the matter). However, to do so openly would humiliate the temple, so any investigation must be covert. To employ Ninja would be distasteful, if not unthinkable, so Kawaguchi Takashi has decided to seek the help of free agents. This is (of course) where the player characters may become involved.

When hired, the PCs will be informed by a Kawaguchi 'Hatamoto' that they are to pose as students at the temple while trying to discover the identity of the person(s) responsible for the various crimes. If the PCs are successful in this they should report their findings to a member of the Kawaguchi Clan or, if they think it better, directly to the Temple staff. Their reward from the Kawaguchi for their service should be bountiful and based on the Budo of the criminal(s); the form of the reward should be decided by the referee as Takashi-sama, and may include artifacts.

The PCs will be advised against taking any action against the criminals themselves, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

For The Referee Only:

The murderer, who is responsible for the other misdemeanors, is also a Tenuki. This creature was once crossed by Terazawa Otake and is now taking his revenge by disgracing the temple and so shaming Otake-Sensei. The Tenuki may cast 5 spells of the School of Earth per day as a Shugenja of Level 3. In human form, he may fight with Sumai.

| | | Attack | |
|-----|-----------|------------------|----------------|
| BAP | : 25 AC | : 3 BiteBCS | : 10 DAM : 1D6 |
| MNA | : 3 HPT | : 35 2 Claws BCS | : 16 DAM : 1D6 |
| ZAN | : 2 BUDDO | : 5 Sumai | : 10 DAM : +3 |
| BMA | : 6 | Magic BCS | : 11 |

The Tenuki has taken the place of a member of the temple; the 'real' NPC has been disposed of. Exactly who it should be is left to the referee;

To avoid unnecessary difficulty for the PCs, his identity should be restricted to one of the temple staff. Terazawa's sons are unlikely candidates since Otake's wife, being a shape-shifter herself, could quite easily spot that something was amiss. (However, the Tenuki could have replaced the Kitsune...) Possibly the most likely candidate is the Abbot; his recent withdrawal from everyday affairs would provide cover for an imperfect impersonation.

The referee should make the final decision for himself! He should, however, remember that the Tenuki is cunning enough to plant evidence to implicate someone else; for example, a (stolen) personal item, such as an 'ori-sen' (fan) or 'netsuke', or something appropriate to someone's particular skill, such as yarrow stalks (for I-ching divination). To add insult to injury, the Tenuki may try to implicate one of the Otake-Sensei's sons.

The referee should also bear in mind that the temple will be making its own investigation and suspicious behaviour by the PCs is likely to suggest that they are in league with the murderer! Any claim that they are acting on behalf of the Kawaguchi Clan will be strongly denied by Takashi-Sama.

If the PCs discover Suza-san's true identity but realise that she is not the murderer, she may be willing to help them, but will not do so openly: However, she may come to their defence if they are wrongly accused of complicity. In any event, she may well be acting independently to avoid her husband losing face.

While the PCs are making their investigation, the referee might have the Tenuki commit some more crimes (again in the guise of an ordinary Yamabushi, and, perhaps, returning to the Inn of the Wild Pinks) to give them some fresh clues to work with. If the PCs are particularly unlucky (or slow witted) and are not making progress, the referee could have them attacked (singly or as a group, depending on their strength) by the Tenuki, who is, after all, a malicious and often unpredictable creature.

If the referee wishes a further complication, it could be that the Abbot is, in Fact, a Tatsu. Or perhaps the Tenuki is Masquerading as a Tatsu in the person of the Abbot....

Enjoy

KATSUMUSHI-O-TERA (Notes for AD&D)

The notes which follow are primarily intended for those DMs who wish to play this scenario but who do not have access to 'Oriental Adventures', but DMs with 'OA' may still find the suggestions useful. Bear in mind that they are only suggestions; the DM should vary the details as he sees fit.

Character and monster descriptions are provided, together with suggestions about Buddhist Clerics (Gakusho) and Japanese weapon proficiencies. An extensive list of Japanese weapons and armour is also given, with their suggested AD&D stats.

The DM should decide on a suitable reward for the PCs appropriate to his campaign; note that it is likely to include such bulky things as works of art as well as coins and gems, and may include magic items.

Dewa Province and the City of Akita

There is a thieves' Guild in Akita, but criminal activity in the rest of Dewa province is only loosely controlled by various high level Thieves.

The Ninja Clan of the Night Hawks becomes simply (and more prosaically) the (Dewa) Guild of Assassins.

The temples and schools in Akita can be regarded as appropriate places for PCs to complete the training required for level

advancement.

The Dragonfly Temple

Temple Troops :

225 1st Level Fighter / 1st Level Cleric (or 1st level Paladin)

75 3rd Level Fighter / 1st Level Cleric (or 3rd level Paladin)

15 5th-6th Level Fighter / 1st-3rd Level Cleric (or 5th-6th level Paladin)

Hidezumi Tetsuaki : 10th Level Cleric

STR : 8 INT : 18

WIS : 18 DEX : 17

CON : 10 CHA : 15

18 H.P. AC7 (OR 6)

Weapon Proficiencies:

Bo Staff; Naginata (bardiche)

Weapons :

Spells : Cure light wounds, Protection from evil, Remove fear, Augury, Chant, Slow Poison, Cure Blindness, Cure Disease, Dispel Magic, Prayer, Cure Serious Wounds, Divination, Exorcise, Neutralise Poison, Commune, Cure Critical Wounds, Raise Dead, True Seeing, All Appropriate Ceremonies (UA)

If the DM is playing this variation, the Abbot may be a Gold Dragon (MM), or an Oriental Dragon (Pan Lung or T'ien Lung; FF) in human form, rather than a Tatsu.

Terazawa Otake :

10th Level Fighter / 3rd Level Cleric

STR : 18 (01)INT : 11

WIS : 11 DEX : 18

CON : 17 CHA : 14

45 H.P. AC6 (or1)

complete light Samurai armour

Weapon Proficiencies : Swords, Yari (spear), Open Hand Attacks (as a monk), Naginata (bardiche), Bows

Weapons : as Bushido description (see appendix), or Bastard Sword, Short Sword, Jo Stick, Two- Handed Swords, Spear, Bardiche, Long Composite Bow

Spells : Cure light wounds, Protection from evil, Remove fear, Augury, Chant

Other Staff

See also the Bushido descriptions

Fujio is a 7th level cleric who always carries 'augury' and 'divination' spells.

Hisazaku is a 5th level monk.

Eguchi Ryuchi is a 7th level fighter who specialises in 'naginata' (halberd) fighting, with a 'to hit/to' damage bonus of 3/3 due to his exceptional skill.

Shoichi a 6th level cleric, can prepare potions of healing.

Terazawa Takeyuji, a 5th level fighter / 3rd level cleric (or 5th level paladin), fights with swords and spear.

Yutaka is a 5th level cleric who, by meditation, can effectively cast 'remove fear' spells on himself.

Terazawa Suza:

Kitsune are fox spirits of Japanese legend (see, for a contemporary example, Tanizaki Junichiro's 'Arrowroot' [Picador]). They are noble (but sometimes cowardly), crafty and whimsical, and renowned as magicians. A complete description is beyond

the scope of these notes.

The nearest official AD&D monster is the foxwoman (MM2; c.f. the werefox in Master D&D), but the werefox in WD19 is somewhat closer to the Bushido monster. Those without access to either of these versions may treat Suza-San as a were-wolf (MM) of 24 h.p. and AC8 (AC4 in fox form). However, Kitsune are not true lycanthropes; their shape-changing is not governed by the moon, they may be hit by normal weapons, and they are not affected by wolfsbane. In addition to being able to cast 6 spells (Enchantment/Charm and Illusion/Phantasm) per day as an 8th level MU, Illusionist or, possibly, Houri (WD13; best of WD1), she has the ability (kitsune-momoku) to convince 3 characters [who make checks against the effect of this power as for a charm person spell] that she is absolutely not a fox, despite any evidence to the contrary.

The Inn of the Wild Pinks

The Inn Keeper, Tamiaki, and the Croupier, Yoshio, should be played as a 2nd and 1st Level Thief, respectively.

Tenuki are creatures similar to Kitsune, but coarser, uncouth and often malicious. The animal form is the Badger-like Raccoon-dog (*nyctereutes procynoides*). Again, this creature has no simple equivalent in AD&D, but a full description is not appropriate here. In this scenario, the Tenuki can be played as a Jackalwere (MM) with 29 h.p. and AC8 (AC5 in Jackal form); like the Kitsune, the Tenuki is not a true lycanthrope. Instead of the Jackalwere's 'gaze' attack, he has the ability of Tenuki-Bi (which he may use 5 times per day): by drumming on his distended belly he weaves a 'charm person' spell with which he will lure a character into a dangerous position or location (swamp, precipice, etc; c.f. the behaviour of a will-o-wisp (MM)). He may also cast 5 spells (Illusion/Phantasm) per day as a 6th level MU or Illusionist. In human form he fights as a 6th level monk.

1. BUDDHIST GAKUSHO

Buddhist Gakusho are comparatively weaker than most AD&D Clerics, though they have no weapon restrictions, they may use only a limited number of spells (as listed in the character descriptions above). In any case, the description of the spell-like powers of the Gakusho--Yogas, the I-Ching, Za-Zen meditation--in terms of AD&D, clerical spells can only be very approximate. A full description of Buddhist Gakusho as a PC class is beyond the scope of these notes. In general, they should be restricted to using only 'divination', 'abduction' and 'necromantic' spells (but not such spells as animate dead), and ceremonies (Unearthed Arcana). Standard PC Clerics already in the game, worshipping Japanese deities from the DDG (L&L), can be taken to be Shinto Gashuko, to whom the above restrictions may not apply.

These suggestions also apply to the Paladin-like Yamabushi.

2. WEAPON PROFICIENCIES :

In Bushido, a single Bugei (skill) may govern the use of more than one weapon, thus, Kenjutsu allows the use of Waki-

zashi, Katana, and No-Dachi. This has been assumed in the AD&D descriptions above, hence a weapon proficiency of 'swords' would allow the use of 'short, bastard, and two-handed' swords (there is no Nipponese equivalent of the long sword). This usage should be restricted to a Japanese campaign, where the same fighting technique is used with all swords, which is not the case with 'European' weapons in AD&D. Iaijutsu (a fast draw technique) gives the initiative in the first round of a sword fight, if weapons are sheathed beforehand. Ni-to-Kenjutsu allows fighting with two swords (bastard and short) at no penalty. (Both these skills count as separate weapon proficiencies).

Since many Bushi had some unarmed-combat skill (eg. atemi-waza, sumai) which used hand blows, fighters in a Japanese campaign should be allowed open hand attacks (as a monk of the same level, and attacking on the monk's Combat Matrix) as one weapon proficiency.

Nipponese Weapons and Armour in AD&D

Weapons :

The following list is meant only as a guide. The DM should feel free to alter any details as he sees fit. If he would rather simply substitute the AD&D counterparts of the Bushido weapons, he may follow the suggestions given in Graeme Davis's 'Bujutsu' (WD43), or see his 'Japanese Bujutsu' (Imagine 25).

| Sword | Katana | No-Dachi | Wakizashi |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Weight (gp) | 50 | 80 | 30 |
| Space Req. | 3' | 4' | 2' |
| Speed Factor | 3' | 5' | 2' |
| AC adj as a/ | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| Dam S or M-L | Bastard/ | /Sword/ | /Broad/ |
| | 3-10 | 2-16 | 1-8 |
| | 3-14 | 2-20 | 1-10 |

Swords in Nippon have blades of varying quality:

| | | |
|--------|----------|---------------------|
| 01-20% | Poor | -1/-1 hit/to damage |
| 21-80% | Average | -/- |
| 81-92% | Good | +1/+1 |
| 93-98% | Superior | +2/-2 |
| 99-00% | Master | +3/+3 |

N.B. These bonuses are due to the quality of the blade only, they are not magical!

The price of an average sword should be about three times as much as its AD&D equivalent; the price of other blades should correspond to their quality and rarity.

Scabbards are often works of art in their own right; they should be priced accordingly

Bow Classes: **Dai-Kyu** (asymmetric Longbow)

Han Kyu (Short Bow)

| Dai-Kyu | 1 Man | 2 Man | 3 Man | 4 Man |
|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Strength | | | | 18 (01) |
| Rating: | 10 or Less | 11-15 | 16-18 | or more |
| Range: | | | | |
| (SML) | 20-70-160 | 30-80-170 | 40-90-180 | 50-100-190 |
| Attack : | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| Damage: | Std | 2* | 3* | 4* |

| Han-Kyu | 1 Man | 2 Man | 3 Man |
|----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| Strength | | | |
| Rating: | 15 or Less | 16-18 | 18(01) or more |

| Han-Kyu | 1 Man | 2 Man | 3 Man |
|----------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strength | | | |
| Rating: | 15 or Less | 16-18 | 18(01) or more |
| Range: | | | |
| (SML) | 20-50-110 | 30-60-120 | 40-70-130 |
| Attack : | 0 | + | - |
| Damage: | Std | 2* | 3* |

The *Dai-kyu* and *Han-Kyu* should have the armour class adjustments of long and short composite bows respectively.

| Arrow : | Damage: | Armour Type Adjustment : |
|---------------------------|---------|---|
| Hike me (humming bulb) | 1D3 | none (hums inflight; used for signalling) |
| Togari ya (armour pierce) | 1D4 | +2v. light ashigaru/samurai or ninja armour +1v. heavy ashigaru/samurai armour |
| Watakushi (bowel raker) | 2D4 | -2v. light ashigaru/samurai or ninja armour -4v. heavy ashigaru/samurai armour |
| Yanagi ba (willow leaf) | 1D6 | NONE |

Togari - ya and Watakushi are available for the Dai - Kyu. The armour type adjustments are in addition to the armour class adjustments for the bow.

Weapons:

| | Wt. (gp) | Lth Reqd: | Space Factor: | Speed: 1 | AC Adj as a: | Dam: Sor ML |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| Aiguchi ^a | 5 | 1' | 1 | | Dagger | 1-4 1-3 |
| Naginata | 120 | 7' | 7 | 6 | Bardiche | 2-1 6 1-20 |
| Ono | 200 | 4.5' | 5' | 6 | Halberd | 2.16 1-20 |
| Shuriken ^b | - | - | as | | darts | - |
| Tanto ^a | 10 | 1' | 1' | 1 | Dagger | 1-6 1-6 |
| Tesubo | 250 | 6' | 4' | 5 | Mace | 2-12 2-16 |
| Yari | 100 | 6' | 2' | 6 | Spear | 1-10 1-12 |

a) These weapons may be hurled; treat just as daggers.

b) Shuriken may be simple metal spikes or many-pointed stars; Both types should be treated as darts in AD&D. They were often poisoned.

These weapons should have similar prices to their AD&D equivalents.

Some of these weapons could, like swords, be of variable quality, but not better than 'superior' (2).

ARMOUR DESCRIPTION:

| | Bushido | AC | AD&D |
|---|---------|----|------|
| Naked; underwear | | 0 | 10 |
| Peasant or Samurai garb; | | 1 | 10 |
| Buddhist Robes | | | |
| Ninja Garb, Winter Clothes | 2 | | 9 |
| Samurai Court Clothes | | | |
| Ceremonial Clothes | | | |
| Partial Light Ashigaru or Samurai Armour | 3 | | 8 |
| Light Ashigaru or Samurai Armour | 4 | | 7 |
| Partial Ninja Armour | | | |
| Partial Heavy Ashigaru or Samurai Armour | 5 | | 6 |
| Heavy Ashigaru or Complete Light Samurai Armour | 6 | | 5 |
| Ninja Armour | | | |
| Heavy Samurai or Complete Ninja Armour | 7 | | 4 |
| Complete Heavy Samurai Armour | 8 | | 3 |
| Superior Heavy Samurai Armour | 9 | | 2 |
| Master Heavy Samurai Armour | 10 | | 1 |

Samurai Armour should be priced similarly to the (dearest) AD&D equivalent; Light armour does not reduce movement, Heavy armour reduces movement to 9'.

Ashigaru armour is cheaper but more cumbersome, Light and Heavy armour reducing movement to 9' and 6'.

Superior and Master Samurai armour should be be priced as 1 and 2 plate; Note that they are not magical, the bonuses being due solely to the quality of the armour (c.f. swords, above).

Ninja armour is available only to Ninja. Complete Ninja armour is similar (in function, if not in form) to 'elfin' chain.

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For players of the
DUNGEONS &
DRAGONS® game

The Words of Go-guji

by Mike Brunton



A mini-module for the
BUSHIDO and
AD&D® games
 for 3-5 players.

This scenario is designed for a party of 3-5 Bushido adventurers. Because there is no real relationship between the skills and the level that a character can have, no precise guidance as to levels can be given. Characters should be 2nd or 3rd level with one or two good combat skills — but if characters of this level do not exist in the campaign there is the possibility of gaining allies during the adventure. At least one of the characters should be of a profession other than Bushi or Budoka.

If you intend running a character in this adventure, you should read no further. The rest of the information is for the referee alone.

Introduction

This adventure can be set in any mountainous and relatively inaccessible area of Nippon. Although nominally located in Mutsu Province, the village of Shinen, Kumo Castle and the surrounding valley can be placed in any location that the referee finds convenient for his or her campaign.

The Bushido Non-Player Characters given in the text already have level adjustments made to their BCS scores and the like.

When using the adventure for **AD&D®** characters, statistics given on pages 24 and 33 should be substituted for the Bushido statistics. The characters should be 3rd to 5th level. Unless noted otherwise in that section the general flow of the adventure will be unaltered.

A Note on Pronunciation

Unlike English, there are no silent vowels in Japanese — or at least there are none in the version which is spoken in the fantasy world of Nippon. As with Italian, ending vowels are sounded. Kumo Ushii is pronounced **KOO-MOH OO-SHE-EE**, sake as **SAH-KEH** etc, with all the syllables given an equal stress.

A glossary of Japanese words is included in the statistics for the AD&D game.

Background

The village of Shinen, located in a mountain valley south of Hirosaki in Mutsu Province, has never been worthy of attention since the end of silver mining in the surrounding hills. The Kumo 'clan' have held the lands around Shinen for generations, content to live on the proceeds of the mines and the labours of the peasantry. Kumo Castle, the fortified mansion that controls the valley, is little more than a large manor house, although it has a strong defensive position. Remote and now unimportant, Shinen has sunk into almost total obscurity.

Three years ago, in the middle of the worst winter that Shinen had seen, a bonze — a travelling Buddhist monk — arrived in the valley by mountain paths. Nearly dead from exposure, he was taken in and nursed by the village headman and his family. When the bonze had recovered, he cured the headman's grandmother of her blindness in payment for the kindness shown to him.

The bonze presented himself to Kumo Ushii, master of Kumo Castle and Shinen village, and the last of his family. The bonze humbly asked for permission to remain in the village, teaching and healing the villagers of their ailments — at least until the worst of the winter had passed. Kumo Ushii could find no cause to refuse the monk this request, although personally he preferred the Shinto faith. He gave his consent, and asked the bonze for his name. 'Go-guji' replied the Buddhist monk truthfully, as that was the name his father had given him.

At this Kumo Ushii flew into a great rage, for a go-guji is a priest at a Shinto shrine. Kumo Ushii was convinced that the bonze was deliberately insulting him and his religion — and in front of his samurai retainers. Again he asked the man for his name, and again the bonze replied 'Go-guji'. Kumo Ushii was now beside himself with anger, and signalled two of his samurai to hold the bonze. Before they could touch the monk he had knocked them senseless with his staff. Then Go-guji turned to Kumo Ushii and said 'It is against my faith to kill, so you shall not be killed. You shall not be killed!'

As the last word fell from his lips, Go-guji was dead. Tadaka Kuwe, Kumo's chief retainer, had struck off the bonze's head from behind with a single stroke of his katana. Kumo Ushii pushed the body with his foot, and ordered it to be hung from a gibbet as a warning to all those who dared to be disrespectful. The body hung for two weeks and was then thrown into a rubbish pit.

Kumo Ushii forgot the bonze. With the coming of spring he and his men resumed their life of fighting and hunting. The peasants did not forget the bonze, and gave little offerings to the kami on his behalf before returning to the fields.

But with the first month of summer, the bonze's words came back to the thoughts of Kumo Ushii. He and five of his retainers were attacked by a group of ronin — wandering, masterless samurai. All but one of the attackers were swiftly cut down, but the leader gave more of a fight, and severely wounded Kumo Ushii, toppling him from his horse. The retainers gathered round their master, who had been slashed across the chest. Amazed that he was not dead when they saw the rent in his armour, they were horrified when Ushii Kumo sat up, his ribs and collar bone clearly visible within the wound.

In tremendous agony, and holding his wound closed, Kumo Ushii climbed into his saddle and rode for home. His chest and neck had been deeply cut by the ronin's blade, but he did not bleed — there was only pain in the wound, not blood.

The wound was sewn up, but it refused to heal and the pain became a dull, constant ache. The stitches rotted and fell out, and the wound opened again, yet still it did not bleed. A second set of stitches rotted and again the wound opened. Others were wounded, and suffered in the same way. Kumo Ushii and his retainers were ensorcelled, cursed with the dying words of the bonze. There was sake to numb the pain, and gold



thread to hold wounds closed, but there was no healing for those who had heard Go-guji's words — Kumo Ushii and his samurai.

The samurai abandoned honour as 'weakness' when they realised that although they could be injured and wounded, they could not die in battle. Kumo Ushii remembered the bonze's last words, and decided that their 'invulnerability' was the reward for dealing with the man's insolence in a proper fashion. He began to think of himself as an immortal, free to do what he wished. He and his men put aside their honour as bushi and took to a life of banditry and bloodshed, killing travellers on the roads and taking what they wanted.

For more than two years they have lived in this fashion, terrorising villagers of Shinen into silence with their deathless power and ambushing travellers without mercy. Only a few have been spared — a physician, Gono, two geisha, Azo and Daki, and a young woman of the Buke class, Tsumo Ishisu. She was knocked unconscious before she could commit jigai — seppuku for women. Although carefully watched and guarded, she is more than she appears, and is making plans to obtain help...

Tsumo Ishisu is a shugenja — a sorceress — and to a limited degree a seeress as well. She has been using the spell **Walk the Way of Wood** in an attempt to find help, although so far without any real success. Those she has approached in this way have all been superstitious peasants, who have fled in terror at the sight of her 'noble ghost' — or been too stupified with awe to take notice of what she was trying to tell them. One of her attempts is at the Shrine in the Mist (Encounter 1 — see below), which will offer the party the first clues as to the true nature of the adventure they should undertake.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure should start in Hirosaki or a nearby village on the south bound road to Akita. Merchants regularly pass through, as do other travellers — pilgrims, soldiers and officials. During the time the player characters are in Hirosaki or the village they should hear travellers' rumours of bandits in the mountains, unkillable warriors who attack merchant caravans, and strange mists that swallow men. However, the referee should make it clear that even those telling such stories do not give them much credence.

The player characters should be persuaded to travel south to Akita, perhaps on their own, or as the escort to some merchant or pilgrim. The exact motive for this journey is up to the referee, depending upon the details of the campaign and the aims of the player characters involved.

Encounters on the Road

The referee should not use the standard encounter tables for this adventure, and should use only the standard encounters given below. The true nature and location of the adventure will only become evident after this sequence of encounters. Detailed maps are not provided for these encounters; they are straightforward enough not to require them.

1. The Shrine in the Mist

After the party have been travelling for some time, possibly over the course of several days, the road starts climbing into the mountains. A thin mist starts to gather beneath the trees on each side of the south bound road, becoming thicker as time passes and the road makes it way up towards a low mountain pass.

By early morning the party have reached a small, apparently deserted Shinto shrine, wreathed in mist. Dedicated to Dosojin, the kami of roads and travellers, it is plain and unadorned. There is nothing of value within the shrine, except a small stone statue of the kami, and some offerings of dried fruit and rice.

Just beyond the shrine the road turns to the west, prior to dropping down into the valley beyond. Another, rougher road forks away from the main way, leading southwards and higher up into the mountains.

As the party reach this point, the mist will grow thicker — as if aided by some supernatural agency — and a damp chill will settle over the shrine and the surrounding area. Any armour and clothing will become wet with condensation, and bowstrings which are unprotected will become damp almost to the point of uselessness (BCS -4 when using an affected bow).

The referee should read the following to the players:

Out of the mist walks a young woman clad in a simple kimono, of such a colour that it is difficult to tell where it ends and the mist begins. She barely seems to touch the ground as she walks, and the plants she brushes against are not disturbed by her passage. The woman bows slightly to the shrine, then turns towards you and speaks:

'Greetings. I have waited for such as you. Honour and death await you on your road, the road to my prison. Honour and death must be restored to their proper places — you are the ones I have chosen.

Three will you meet, three will you fight, three will you defeat, on the south road.

'Go not to Akita.'

The young woman points along the narrower road that leads up into the mountains. Before she can say more, a tremendous wind seems to tear at her hair and her clothing, although you feel nothing in the damp mist. With a final, almost despairing, cry the woman's form seems to blow apart and dissolve into the mist, as though she had never been.

The 'ghost' is Tsumo Ishisu (see below for full statistics), who is at present being held prisoner in Kumo Castle. She has been interrupted during the casting of her **Walk the Way of Wood**, by her body being directly threatened with death. As a result of returning to her body she has taken 13 points of subdual damage.

Any Gakusho and Shugenja should be allowed to make a Wit Saving Throw to realise that the young woman was not a ghost, but a Shugenja casting a **Walk the Way** spell of some type. The player characters should be encouraged to take Tsumo's appearance and speech as a prophecy — one which predestines them to do her bidding.

Any Non-Player Characters (pilgrims, merchants or the like) who are accompanying the party will opt to return to Hirosaki after this unnerving — to them — encounter with the supernatural. The player characters will be released from any obligations that they owe to these NPCs at this point, freeing them from prior constraints of duty.

2. The Tengu

This encounter takes place at the point marked **1** on Map 1: Shinen Village and Kumo Castle. The player characters enter the valley along the road on the north edge of that map.

The road climbs slowly into the mountains, along the side of a narrow river valley. Towards mid-morning the mist will clear and the countryside will open up into a pleasant river valley, sheltered by the surrounding high peaks. The road winds its way along the side of a wooded valley bottom. After describing this peaceful scene to the players the referee should read out the following:

Ahead the woods come to an end, and the bottom of the river valley is given over to small paddy fields. In the distance a large manor house stands on a mound in the middle of a serene and beautiful lake. Before you can take in more of this scene there is cackling laughter over your head, and stones start dropping all around you.

A curious creature, half crow half man, drops onto a large rock near the road and hops backwards, forwards and from side to side in some excitement. As it speaks in a hoarse, cawing voice, its hopping grows even more manic.

'HA! Fight! Fight! Fight me, brave warriors! Fight me, wily swordsmen! Need challenges I do! HA! Need to battle true men, I do! Fight! Fight! Fight! Need to test my sword, I do! Duel, we will! Fight one of you, I will, but Kakati is better! Always Tengu is better! HA!'

Despite his brave words, Kakati the Tengu will hop up and down on his rock, cawing 'Fight, fight, fight!' every once in a while, rather than actually initiate combat. He will assume, however, that any action such as readying or drawing a weapon as an invitation to begin, and will leap from his rock onto the road in preparation for combat, drawing his katana as he does so. If any missile weapons are fired at him Kakati will attempt to use his yadomejutsu skill to parry them, then he will attack, cawing 'No honour! HA! Worthy of my sword you are not!' as he does so. Kakati will attempt to peck the character(s) who fired at him, and then escape into the trees.

If the party choose to ignore him, Kakati will follow them, generally making a complete nuisance of himself by attempting to steal any bright, shiny objects that are visible on the player characters. He will also make sufficient noise and disturbance to make quiet movement or concealment impossible.

If any member of the party does choose to fight him, Kakati will be overjoyed and very respectful to that character. He will hop down onto the road and wait politely, but with some impatience, for the character to ready himself.

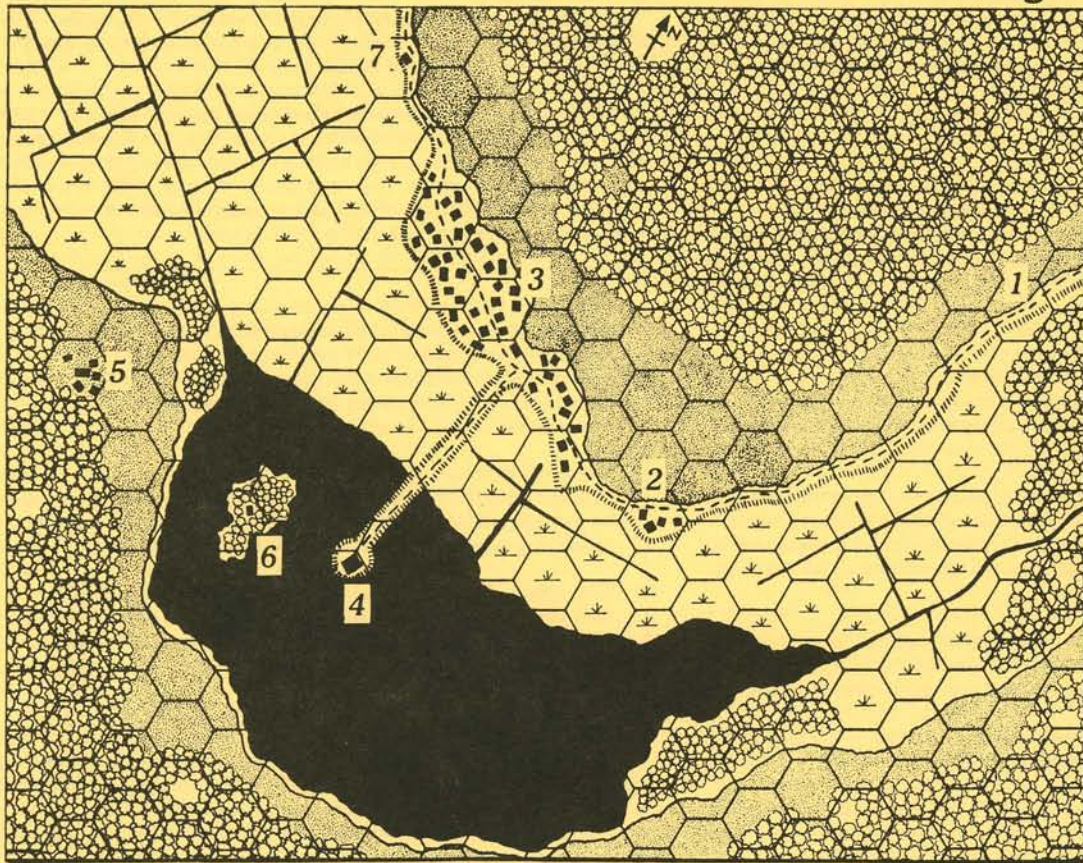
Kakati is a Karasu Tengu, and a skilful and courageous opponent: BAP 12 (24); MNA 2; ZAN 2; BMA 4 (7); AC 5 (7); HPT 25; BUDO 3; Dam +1d6; bracketed statistics apply to the Tengu when he is flying. SKILLS: Kenjutsu (21) with Reverse Cut (18) and Disarm (20) Okuden, Yadomejutsu (18), Sumai (BCS 11, Dam 2d6) when on the ground. WEAPONS: Master quality Katana (BCS +3, Dam +3) — Kakati's Kenjutsu and Okuden BCSs take this weapon into account; Beak (BCS 12, Dam 1d3).

In the fight Kakati will attempt to disarm his opponent(s) rather than wound them. His skill with the Reverse Cut Okuden means that he has little fear of being surrounded, and when he successfully uses this skill he will make a point of cawing loudly about his success. Initially (until he is wounded) Kakati will not fight to kill, but merely for the fun of exercising his swordsmanship. The referee should ignore any critical successes, and reduce any damage caused by two steps, but should tell the players that the Tengu is obviously 'pulling his punches'. Once wounded Kakati will fight in earnest, but take the earliest opportunity to flee back to his rock.







Once Kakati has drawn blood he will hop back onto his rock looking very pleased with himself. If he is not attacked at this point he will compliment those involved in the fight on their skill in his strange cawing way, 'Good you are! Worthy of Kakati! Better than the dead ones!' If he is attacked he will fly off into the trees and will not be encountered again.

Kakati will be quite willing to talk after the fight, given the opportunity. He knows little of the doings of the Shinen villagers, as he avoids

MAP 1: Shinen Village & Kumo Castle



KEY

-  woodland/scrub
-  rice paddy
-  buildings
-  banking/causeway
-  road
-  hillside

1 hex = 50 yards

peasants as unworthy creatures. He does, however, know that all is not right at Kumo castle, and will relate the following about the samurai from the castle:

'Fight! HA! Fought, we did! Wounded them, I did! HA! Cheated, they did! Bleed and die, they did not! Cut them hard, Kakati did! Saw their bones, I did! Always Tengu is better! HA! But not against dead men who don't die...'

Kakati will offer no further explanation, and will become relatively subdued after this speech.

If the referee feels it necessary for the party's chances of success in this adventure, Kakati can be used as an ally to the players. After the duel he will offer his friendship — Kakati is mischievous rather than wicked — and if this is accepted he will hop round the character who offered to fight him, cawing delightedly. The referee should play Kakati as a rather impetuous, impatient individual who enjoys nothing better than the chance to show off in combat. He will be quite happy to fall in with whatever plans are made by the party.

3. 'Three will you meet...'

This encounter will occur at the group of houses marked 2. The road will be empty, although it will be obvious to even the most casual observer that people are watching from behind their doors and window screens.

After the encounter with Kakati the Tengu the adventurers should be persuaded to continue on to Shinen Village, whether the Tengu is with them or not. Oddly, there is no-one at work in the fields or moving about near the houses. Smoke from a cooking fire is rising from the castle.

Before the adventurers have gone more than a quarter of a mile — and well before they go round the bend that allows them to see the bulk of the village — they will be overtaken by three mounted and armoured samurai, with tattered and war-stained banners fluttering behind them. The samurai are leading four sweating pack animals, heavily laden with boxes and bundles of merchant's goods.

The samurai will canter along the road, oblivious to those in their way — except the player characters. Regardless of where they see the PCs, the samurai will pull up, wheel, and attack, unless the PCs are striving to

appear like frightened villagers themselves. Anything that differs from the normal atmosphere of terror will attract the attention of the samurai.

The samurai are Saitoh, Gozo and Hirato Hodaka (see Non-Player Characters for full details). The brothers are three of Kumo Ushii's retainers, returning from a raid with their spoils.

Saitoh and Gozo are 2nd level Bushi (HPT 33/31, 32/5 — see below for an explanation of the two HPT statistics), armed with a No-dachi, Katana and Wakazahi each. Hirato is a 1st level Bushi (HPT 26/0) armed only with a Yari and a No-dachi. All are wearing AC 6 Complete Light Samurai Armour.

The Hodaka brothers will press home their attack with grim determination, at least until one of them is wounded. At this point they will attempt to withdraw and, if successful, they will gallop down the causeway and into Kumo castle (marked 4), dragging the pack animals with them. Should this be impossible, they will fight on, only so that they may resort to 'playing dead' once they have been wounded. Once they are 'dead' they will crawl back to the castle through the paddy fields, as soon as they are ignored by the party as just dead bodies.

The pack horses bundles are made up entirely of bottles of sake and plum brandy.

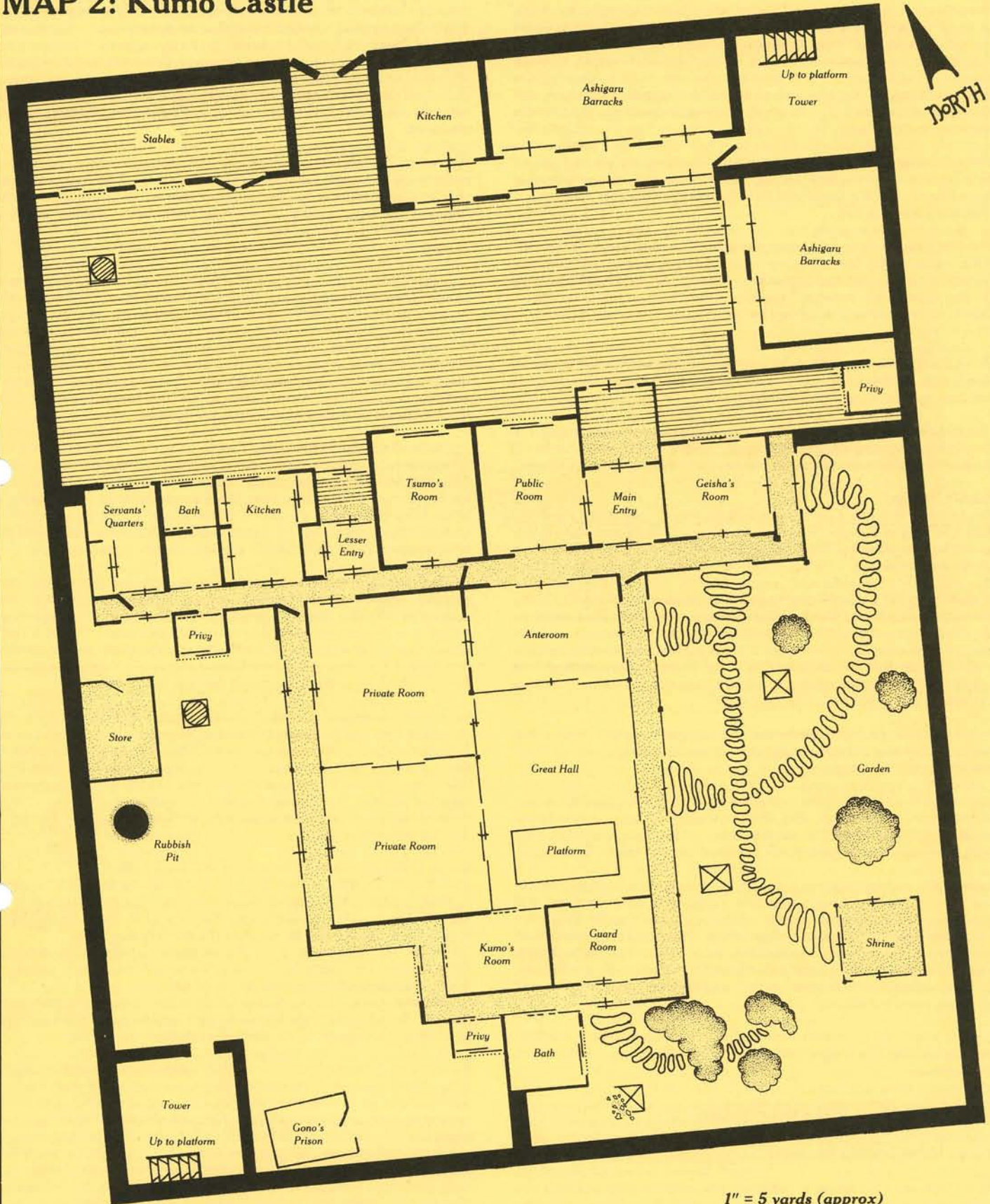
SHINEN VALLEY AND KUMO CASTLE

Shinen Village

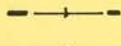
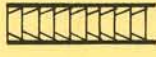




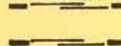
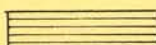


The main part of Shinen village (marked 3) is made up of simple peasant houses and storehouses. The village is clean, tidy and well kept but, for the most part, curiously 'unlived in', as though the inhabitants do not want to draw attention to themselves.

Such is indeed the case. The villagers, under their headman, Tanabe, realise that the Lord of the valley, Kumo Ushii, is not the just man he once was. Rather than offer any cause for anger to the uncanny Kumo and his retainers, the villagers have opted to take as little interest as possible in what happens beyond their walls. Except when working in the fields or hunting on the steep slopes around Shinen, the villagers stay hidden, watching from behind their windows, but never showing themselves unless they have no choice.

MAP 2: Kumo Castle



1" = 5 yards (approx)

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|---------|
|  | sliding doors |  | stairs |  | well |
|  | window with shutters |  | bare wooden floor |  | lantern |
|  | window |  | packed earth |  | path |
|  | wooden door | | | | |

The only exceptions to this are Tanabe, who still goes about his business as headman and deals with Kumo Ushii on those rare occasions when the village's doings must concern the samurai, and Suto, who is regarded as the village idiot. Suto is far from stupid, however, and has always idolised the samurai — even more so now that they seem to him to be invulnerable. He now acts as Kumo Ushii's eyes and ears in the village, reporting back to him on all matters pertaining to the Kumo's interests in the village.

If the adventurers discuss their plans in the hearing of the villagers and Suto is there — or he is listening (90% chance, unless precautions have been taken) — Kumo Ushii will be informed of the player character's intentions towards him.

The villagers will, once they are assured that the player characters mean them no harm, be friendly but a little withdrawn. They will be quite willing to relate what has happened, although they do not know why Go-guji was killed, or what happened to his body. Tanabe has seen Tsumo Ishisu, and will recognise the description of the 'ghost' as her if he is told it.

There are 90 villagers in total. All are Average Extras (HPT 1 each), with few, if any, combat skills. Given the choice, they will take no part in any violence against Kumo Ushii and his men.

The other buildings in the valley are the abandoned mine workings (5), a small shrine to the Kami of the Lake on the island (6) and a traveller's shrine (7), dedicated to the Jigami (protective kami spirit) of the village.

Kumo Castle

The location of Kumo Castle (marked 4 on Map 1, see Map 2 for more detail) at the end of a long causeway across paddy fields and a lake is the castle's main defence, although it is closer to a large house with a fortified outer wall.

Within the outer walls the buildings are in a poor state of repair. As the samurai have become slipshod and ragged in their own appearance, so the castle has suffered from neglect. Far from being the clean and tidy place it once was, it is in very poor condition. Door and screens are torn and filthy, rubbish — mostly bottles — lies in the courtyards, and flies hover everywhere. The whole place has an unhealthy smell, something between a sickroom and a charnel house.

In the stables are eight warhorses and two pack animals. Once fine animals, they are unkempt and underfed, and the stable has not been cleaned in several days.

Within the main building the rooms are untidy and dirty. Most have one or two pieces of loot — rich silks, clothes, weaponry, coins, artworks etc (total value about 40 gold) — scattered across the floor, liberally mixed with food and drink that has been trampled into the tatami floor mats.

Kumo Ushii still occupies his old room, but the samurai have moved into the main hall of the house. Kanchira Yukika and Kakamei Kono, the Ashigaru, still occupy the smaller of the barracks. Azo and Daki have been given freedom to come and go as they please, but they spend most of their time in their room. Tsumo Ishisu is confined in front of the house and one of the samurai (referee's discretion) is with her at all times. Gono the physician is kept in his cell, a poorly built place that he was forced to make for himself.

Go-guji's body is still in the rubbish pit where it was thrown in the first place, although this is now hidden beneath a pile of empty sake flasks and barrels.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Kumo Ushii and his Samurai

Kumo Ushii and his samurai retainers are unable to die, which is not quite what they believe themselves to be: unkillable and invulnerable. Although they cannot be killed, the wounds they receive do not heal at all, nor do their bodies recover from the normal wear and tear of everyday life. While they are not dying, they are certainly not living — they are merely existing, buoyed up by the artificial good humour of rice wine, plum brandy and the drugs that the physician, Gono, administers to them.

Their affliction can be traced back to Go-guji the bonze, who was not a wicked man, but a victim of the perversity of the supernatural. His spirit is tied to his body, and while it remains in this world Kumo Ushii and his samurai will not know death themselves, no matter how injured or ill

they may become. Should the body of Go-guji be treated with proper respect and be given a decent funeral — the Segaki Rite — his spirit will be freed. The samurai will have their mortality restored to them — they will be as normal men once again. However, they will also suffer the full effects of any wounds they have suffered during between the bonze's death and the present, so it is more than likely that most — if not all — the samurai will succumb to their wounds and die once the bonze's body is cremated.

If none of the player characters is a Buddhist Gakusho capable of performing the Segaki Rite on the body of Go-guji, thus releasing his soul and allowing Kumo Ushii and his men to return to normal, the referee may use Tanabe, the village headman a Rabble Buddhist Gakusho (HPT 5). The player characters would then have to recover Go-guji's body and take it to Tanabe for a proper funeral.

Two ratings are given for the Hit Points of Kumo Ushii and his retainers. In each case, the first of these numbers is the standard HPT of the NPC concerned. However, rather than dying once this total is exceeded, the Samurai will become too damaged to function aggressively, although they will still be alive. They will be capable of little more than dragging themselves away from a fight. This applies to all lethal damage — including magically-caused damage and damage due to fire — that they suffer (if one is killed outright, he is assumed to take damage equal to his HPT). Subdual damage has no effect whatsoever.

The second number is the amount of damage the NPC has taken in the time between Go-guji's death and the present. This number is used to calculate how difficult it is to repair a particular NPC (see below). Once Go-guji's body is given a proper funeral this damage — and any the NPCs have suffered at the hands of the player characters during the course of this adventure — is imposed in full. This could well lead to the NPC dropping dead immediately; Kumo Ushii will certainly do so.

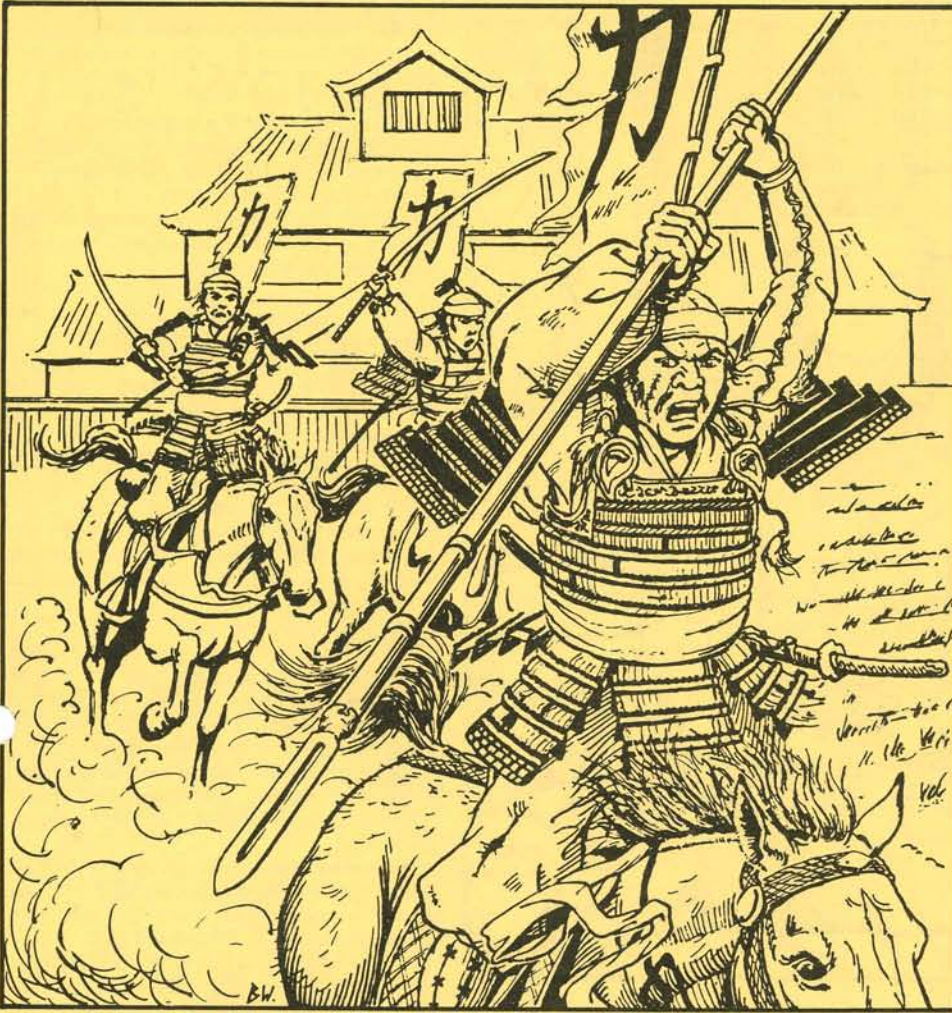
Once Kumo Ushii and his samurai are damaged, they will not heal, but may be repaired by anyone with Physician skill. This includes such actions as stitching wounds closed, straightening and splinting broken bones, and pinning severed body parts back into place. This is a Task, with a Task Value of (total points of damage suffered/5) and a Task turn of 1 hour. For example, the Task Value of repairing Kumo Ushii after a fight in which he takes 23 points of damage is $(23+67)/5 = 18$.

Due to the unnatural condition of Kumo Ushii and his samurai, any character who battles against them should make a Will Saving Throw. Failure means the character involved suffers a -2 BCS penalty, due to the apparent ineffectiveness of his attacks. Furthermore, should a character fight one of the samurai that has already been defeated and repaired another Will Saving Throw is necessary or a further -2 BCS penalty will be incurred because of the unnerving quality of having to 'kill' the same man twice.

Kumo Ushii, Master of Kumo Castle (4th level Bushi)
STR 35; DFT 10; SPD 10; HLH 20; WT 15; WL 30; DAM +4; BAP 5; MN 1; BMA 3; ZAN 2; HPT 50/67; Brawl 8; Climb 5; Leap 5; Swim 5.
SKILLS: Bajutsu (16), Kenjutsu (15), Kyujutsu (13), Naginatajutsu (12), Sojutsu (14), Hawking (19), Heraldry (5), Go (17), Poetry (8).
ARMOUR: AC 1 Good (but rather ill-kept) Samurai Garb over AC4 Partial Ninja Armour; Up to AC5 Partial Heavy Samurai Armour and a suit of AC 9 Superior Heavy Samurai Armour available.
WEAPONS: Always carries (or has to hand) Good Katana and Wakizashi (BCS +1, Dam +1); Average No-dachi, yari, naginata and MR 4 Dai-kyu, with 24 armour piercer arrows also available.

Kumo Ushii, the last of the Kumo clan, presents a strange and disturbing image to the world and one hardly fitting to his station. Beneath the Noh actor's mask he has taken to wearing, his face is seamed with three unhealed cuts, stitched closed by thin gold thread. A hawking glove hides the fact that two of his fingers were nearly severed, and are now similarly stitched back with gold wire. His untidy and rather dirty clothes hang loosely, hiding the ninja mail coat he wears — 'gods' do not need such mundane protection. As the result of a fall from his horse that damaged his right knee, Kumo Ushii limps and finds it difficult to kneel down. His voice is hoarse and his breath wheezes through his original chest wound.

He is bad tempered, impolite, imperious and rarely sober. Although he doesn't even admit it to himself, he knows that his condition is a curse, rather than the blessing that he proclaims it to be. The strain of lying to himself and everyone else about it and the fact that he and his men are now mere bandits makes him aggressive to the point of foolishness. Kumo Ushii never had any real interest in the finer arts of being a Buke, but thanks to the pain of his wounds he has become mean spirited and cruel.



Kumo Ushii is not unintelligent, but he has been backed into a corner by his own sense of shame at becoming an undying thug — despite the pain he loves life and what remains of his 'honour'. Even the restoration of his honour through Seppuku is denied to him and his life is a particularly hard burden to bear without that solace.

Even if the situation — and the need for Go-guji's funeral — is explained to him, he will actively prevent the player characters from recovering the body, as this would, in his opinion, besmirch his remaining honour by respecting one who was 'impolite' to him in the first place.

Tadaka Kuwe, Kumo's chief retainer (3rd level Bushi)

STR 25; DFT 20; SPD 15; HLH 23; WT 3; WL 15; DAM +2; BAP 10; MNA 1; BMA 5; ZAN 2; HPT 37/14; Brawl 6; Climb 10; Leap 7; Swim 7.

SKILLS: Bajutsu (15), Kenjutsu (16), Ni-To-Kenjutsu (15), Sumai (13), Go (3), Hawking (13), Musical Instrument — Fue (15), Painting (10).

ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb; up to AC 6 Complete Light Samurai Armour available, but normally wears only AC 4 when expecting trouble.

WEAPONS: Always carries (or has to hand) Average Katana and Wakizashi; Inferior Katana — his practice weapon — (BCS -1, Dam -1) and MR 2 Dai-kyu (Tadaka suffers -2 BCS when using this weapon due to the wrong Man Rating) with 12 bowel raker arrows and 6 humming bulb arrows available.

Tadaka Kuwe is directly responsible for the current state of affairs. It was his sword that ended Go-guji's life, and the rest of the samurai have held him at a distance ever since.

Although he knows that something is wrong, Tadake doesn't quite know what — or why he is a social outcast. He only knows that he no longer has as many friends as he once did and this, combined with the pain of a face wound that he has suffered, has made him silent, sullen and withdrawn. He has taken to spending much of his time in the garden, come rain or shine, playing his flute and, although he is a good player, he only knows five melodies. In turn his fellow samurai have left him alone to an even greater degree, and prayed that he would learn at least one new tune.

As a result of his face wound Tadaka is blind in his left eye, and the end of his nose is missing. Consequently he suffers all the penalties of partial blindness, and any opponents gain the appropriate bonuses.

Ich'yama, (5th level Bushi)

STR 20; DFT 15; SPD 15; HLH 25; WT 20; WL 25; DAM +1; BAP 7; MNA 1; BMA 5; ZAN 2; HPT 32/22; Brawl 6; Climb 7; Leap 7; Swim 6. SKILLS: Bajutsu (8), Iaijutsu (21) with Lightning Stroke (8) Okuden, Kenjutsu (19) with Precision Strike (9) Okuden, Shurikenjutsu (13), Yadomejutsu (16), Hirigana (16), Court Dance (19), Physician (7), Poetry (16), Shinten (14), Tea Ceremony (19).

ARMOUR: Normally wears AC3 Partial Light Samurai Armour; AC1 Good Samurai Garb over AC4 Partial Ninja Armour worn on 'social' occasions; up to AC 7 Heavy Samurai Armour available, but rarely worn as Ich'yama feels that it interferes with his style of combat.

WEAPONS: Always carries Good Katana (BCS +1, Dam +1), Average Wakizashi and 3 Shuriken. No other weapons available.

Visibly unmarked by his experiences in the last two years, Ich'yama — 'Number One Mountain' — is an expert warrior, a Master of the Tea Ceremony, a theologian and poet — a cultured man, in fact. Ich'yama secretly disapproves of everything that has happened at Kumo Castle, and has even gone as far as committing Kanshi — Seppuku to reprove one's Lord — in an attempt to make Kumo Ushii change his bandit ways. Naturally, his suicide attempt failed, and left him with a massive stomach wound.

In the year since then, Ich'yama has become the most brutal, cruel and unfeeling of the samurai. Denied his right to an honourable death, and feeling polluted by his 'failure', Ich'yama has drowned his guilt in a river of other people's blood. He chooses to exist only for battle, and regularly takes a part in bandit raids, slaughtering all those who cross his path. He has never taken any goods or treasure

while on one these expeditions, thus salving his conscience with an illusion that he is still a true warrior and loyal retainer, rather than a mere bandit.

Shintaro Fumito, Tadake Ryochi, Saitoh and Gozo Hodaka, and Noboyasu Emura (2nd Level Bushi)

STR 20; DFT 20; SPD 15; HLH 25; WT 5; WL 10; DAM +1; BAP 10; MNA 2; BMA 5; ZAN 1; HPT Shintaro Fumito (43/20), Tadake Ryochi* (40/102), Saitoh (33/31) and Gozo Hodaka (32/5), Noboyasu Emura (30/1); Brawl 6; Climb 10; Leap 8; Swim 9.

SKILLS: Bajutsu (13), Kenjutsu (12), Kyujutsu (11), Sojutsu (12), Hawking (10), Go (10).

ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb, Up to AC 8 Complete Heavy Samurai Armour available to each.

WEAPONS: Average Katana and Wakizashi each; three Yari and two Dai-kyu (MR 2) with 24 armour piercer arrows each available to this group; Shintaro and the Hodaka brothers also have an Average No-dachi each.

Kaji Yamabushi, Yamato Maki, Mito Ishiyama, Hirato Hodaka and Mukade Shimokashi (1st level Bushi)

STR 20; DFT 20; SPD 15; HLH 25; WT 5; WL 10; DAM +1; BAP 10; MNA 2; BMA 5; ZAN 1; HPT Kaji Yamabushi* (35/80), Yamato Maki* (30/95), Mito Ishiyama (29/7), Hirato Hodaka (26/0) and Mukade Shimokashi (26/0); Brawl 6; Climb 10; Leap 8; Swim 8.

SKILLS: Bajutsu (12), Kenjutsu (11), Kyujutsu (11), Sojutsu (10), Hawking (10), Go (10); Kaji Yamabushi only: Naginatajutsu (12).

ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb, Up to AC 8 Complete Heavy Samurai Armour available to each.

WEAPONS: Average Katana and Wakizashi and Yari each; one Dai-kyu (MR 2) with 30 armour piercer arrows available; Hirato Hodaka has an Average No-dachi available; Kaji always carries (or has to hand) a Good (BCS +1, Dam +1) Naginata.

Kanchira Yukika* (HPT 10/88), and **Kakamei Kono** (HPT 7/4) are Rabble 1st level Bushi, the only Ashigaru (lesser Samurai) in the service of Kumo Ushii.

SKILLS: Kenjutsu (12); Sojutsu (14); Singing (3).

ARMOUR: AC 1 Inferior Samurai Garb; Up to AC 6 Heavy Ashigaru Armour available to each.

WEAPONS: Average Yari and Wakizashi each; Kakamei Kono habitually hides an Aiguchi in his left sleeve.



The minor retainers are an unwholesome group, who spend most of their time when not engaged in acts of banditry, drinking the proceeds of such raids. Rude to anyone who is not as they are, and polite to each other only because of the apparent necessity of spending eternity together, they are all belligerent and uncaring. They are, quite shamefully for samurai, grubby, unkempt and smelly.

* Tadake Ryochi, Kaji Yamabushi, Yamato Maki and Kanchira Yukika were badly burnt when they accidentally started a fire during one of their raids, hence the inflated second HPT figure. Of all Kumo Ushii's retainers, they are the most frightening and unnatural — they look little better than walking corpses. Gono has given them salves for their burns, but these have done little save ease the pain. Ako and Daki, the Geisha, have tried covering the burns with some of their make-up. It has been only partially successful.

Kumo Ushii's Prisoners

Azo and Daki

SKILLS: Massage (9), Singing (9), Musical Instruments — Koto (6), Samisen (5).

Azo and Daki were captured six months ago when Kumo Ushii and his men fell upon a military supply column by mistake. They were rapidly beaten off, their only prizes being these two women. Both are Rabble Geisha (HPT 3 each) somewhat past their prime and somewhat incompetent at their jobs.

Since then Azo and Daki have lost the taste they had for the 'romantic life' with bandits. They have had a thoroughly miserable time of things, being relegated to drudgery and fetching new bottles of sake, as the Samurai have shown little interest in them as women. They would have run away long ago, but for the fact that they have nowhere else to go.

Gono the Physician

SKILLS: Physician (15), Herbalist (13), Massage (12).

Gono is an Average Man (HPT 10), and a physician of some skill. Captured during an early raid, when Ich'yama realised that his medical skills were inadequate, Gono has been held prisoner, bound in chains, in a makeshift cell for the last year. He is only allowed out to 'cure' — repair is more accurate — as much of the damage the samurai have suffered as he can. Gono is a compassionate man, and feels deeply sorry

for Kumo Ushii and his men, but he knows they would kill him on the spot if he ever said as much.

Gono is waiting for a clear opportunity to escape, and will help the player characters as much as he can, for instance by telling them the history of Kumo Ushii and his strange affliction. Gono also knows where Go-guji's body is — still in the rubbish pit — and he will show anyone its location.

Tsumo Ishisu (1st level Shugenja)

STR 5; DFT 10; SPD 10; HLH 10; WT 20; WL 25; DAM -1; BAP 5; MNA 1; BMA 3; ZAN 1; HPT 12; Brawl 4; Climb 5; Leap 5; Swim 4; Magic 10; Power 30.

SKILLS: Naginatajutsu (10), Calligraphy (14), Court Dance (17), Hiragana (17), Katagana (16), Kanji (16), Japanese Classics (14), Meditation (9), Tea Ceremony (13), Poetry (13).
 ARMOUR: AC 1 Superior Samurai Garb; AC 1 Peasant Garb and AC 2 Good Samurai Court Garb available.

WEAPONS: None carried.

She had **Asagiri** (lit. 'Morning Mist'), a magical No-dachi, in her possession when she was captured. Asagiri is better than a Master quality weapon (BCS +4, Dam +3) which allows its user to cast the spells **Bar Missiles** (School of Metal — 5 charges), **Mirror of Deception** (School of Water — 4 charges) and **Mists of Illusion** (School of Water — as 1st level spell, 7 charges).

This weapon has been confiscated by Kumo Ushii, but he will not use it through ignorance of the weapon's real power and fear of the consequences of unauthorised use.

SPELLS: School of Water (17): Quench; School of Wood (85): Arrow Force; Shadow Eyes; Walk

the Way of Wood; School of Soil (21): Pure Blood; Pure Flesh; Traitor Ground.

Tsumo Ishisu has led a sheltered life, protected from the harshness of the real world. Despite this, she is a well-educated and cultured member of the Buke caste, and adept at the magic that she has so far been taught. Her capabilities are unrealised, rather than limited.

Kumo Ushii and his men assume that Tsumo must be guarded to prevent her from killing herself, Tsumo will not, in fact, commit jigai — she is under an oath that prevents her from taking her life just yet. The exact nature of this oath is not important to this adventure, and Tsumo has not discussed the matter with anybody, nor will she.

Apart from kidnapping her, the samurai have done nothing which is a threat to her honour, although they do not treat her kindly. She is largely left alone, and spends most of her time meditating — a useful cover for when she casts her **Walk the Way of Wood** spell.

Tsumo Ishisu is rather immature, and will romantically attach herself to one of her rescuers — the Bushi of the highest level, although she will prefer a member of the Buke caste. It is up to the referee to determine whether marriage is the outcome of this liaison — Tsumo should be treated as a Good Wife, although her dowry will be nothing more than the No-dachi, Asagiri (see above).

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Once the village of Shinen has been returned to normality, Kumo Ushii and the other dead have been given proper funerals and any survivors of Go-guji's words have been given medical attention (or dealt with as the players see fit), Tsumo Ishisu will ask them to accompany her on her journey home. That journey, what the characters find at the end of it, and the nature of Tsumo's oath are, of course, another adventure...

Credits

Design: **Mike Brunton**
 Art: **Brian Williams**
 Cartography: **Keith Cooper**
 AD&D Stats: **Jim Bamba**