TOKYO :OTHERSCAPE



JAPAN SETTING BOOK

Property of City of Mist. Issued to Jolan Arnaud. Order #219586

POWERED BY: CITY of MIST

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The production of this game was made possible thanks to our Kickstarter backers. Thank you all!

See the full list of backers at the end of M*etro :Otherscape*.

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CONTENT WARNING

This game contains mild language as well as strong themes of violence, crime, and immorality. Parental guidance is advised.

PRONOUN USE

Where the third person is required, this book refers to characters and players as ‘they’ and to the MC as ‘she’. This is an arbitrary division for the sake of readability; characters, players, and MCs may be of any or no gender.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: //TOKYO MEGACITY 6

- Through Neon-Lit Torii Gates 8
- Welcome to Tokyo 20XX 10
  - » The Lay of the Land 13
  - » A Hardware Solution to Every Problem 15
  - » Honor Among Mercs 16
- Streets of Kami 17
  - » New Source Type: Emotion 20
  - » Do You Have a Permit for that Ofuda? 20
  - » Deserted Temples Beneath Your Feet 22
  - » Haunted Castles & Reclusive Enclaves 23
- Corps, Crime, & City Government 24
  - » The Emergency Task Force 25
  - » Active Surveillance 25
  - » The Zaibatsu Corporations 26
  - » Household Names 26
  - » The Yakuza & Oni Gangs 27
- People of Tokyo 20XX 28
- Districts of Tokyo 20XX 31
- Tokyo 20XX Scene Locations 35
- Glossary 38

CHAPTER 2: //BUSHI/LIFE 40

- New Character Creation Options 42
  - » Tokyo Character Tropes 43
  - » Self Theme Kits 54
  - » Mythos Theme Kits 60
  - » Noise Theme Kits 66
- Megacity Specials 72
  - » Player Character Specials 72
  - » Crew Theme Specials 75
- Loadout: Tokyo Street Catalog 76
  - » Access & Perks 77
  - » Ammo 78
  - » Apps, Chips, & Databases 79
  - » Armor 80
  - » Body Attachments & Cybernetics 81
  - » Cyberspace 83
  - » Drones 84
  - » Enhancers 86
  - » Garments & Fashion 87
  - » Merc Gear 88
  - » Source-Touched Items 89
  - » Vehicles 91
  - » Weapons 92

CHAPTER 3: //YŌKAI DATABASE 94

- Megacity Adversaries 96
  - » The Yōkai 97
  - » Cyberspace Yōkai 98
  - » Haunted Locales 101
  - » Prowling Yōkai 105
  - » Social Phenomena Yōkai 114
  - » Underworld Yōkai 117
  - » Non-Yōkai Adversaries 123
- Power Sets 131
  - » Self Power Sets 132
  - » Mythos Power Sets 136
  - » Noise Power Sets 139
- Yōkai Vendors & Goods 142
  - » The Dead Man's Hand 143
  - » Takaraneko Konbini 144
  - » Kodoku Furiuri 145
  - » Wayside Shrines 146

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CHAPTER 4: //KEY PLAYERS 148

- Shoguns of the Cyber-Age Underworld 150
- Bureau of Onmyō 151
  - » Bureau of Onmyō Challenges 155
  - » Membership 158
- Ghost Market 159
  - » Ghost Market Challenges 163
  - » Membership 166
- Great King Enma's Court 168
  - » King Enma's Challenges 172
  - » Membership 176
- Neo-Samurai 177
  - » Neo-Samurai Challenges 182
  - » Membership 184
- Oni Motorcycle Gangs 185
  - » Oni Motorcycle Gang Challenges 189
  - » Membership 191
- Returned Sōma Clan 192
  - » Returned Sōma Clan Challenges 196
  - » Membership 199
- Taiyō Solartech 201
  - » Taiyō Solartech Challenges 206
  - » Membership 209
- Tokoyo 210
  - » Tokoyo Challenges 215
  - » Membership 218
- The Yakuza Clans 220
  - » Yakuza Challenges 225
  - » Membership 228
- Viral Movements 229
  - » Hanko Seals 230
  - » Kawaii Mask Streamers 232
  - » Kumo Racing Clubs 234
  - » Tezuma Stage Magic 235
  - » Yakubyō Gami Roamers 236

CHAPTER 5: //JOBS BULLETIN 239

- Enter The Anthill 240
  - » Background 241
  - » Security at the Anthill 242
  - » Above Ground: Sugi Sleep Clinic 243
  - » Below Ground: The Chambers 245
  - » Kidnapping From Paradise 246
  - » Aftermath 248
- Biting The Bullet 249
  - » Background 250
  - » The Genbi Dangansen 251
  - » Active Programs & Users 254
  - » Defending Crew Itinerary 256
  - » Attacking Crew Itinerary 260
  - » Aftermath 262
- Lost & Flooded 263
  - » Background 264
  - » Trash Diving 265
  - » Aftermath 271
- The Kenko Ruins 272
  - » Background 273
  - » Reaching the Ruins 275
  - » Exploring the Ruins 278
  - » Aftermath 285
- Steam Punks 286
  - » Background 287
  - » The Sento and Neighborhood 289
  - » The Night's Itinerary 292
  - » Aftermath 295
- A Bridge Too Far 296
  - » Background 297
  - » Act I: Ghosted 299
  - » Act II: Fed To The Hounds 302
  - » Act III: The Rush For Answers 306
  - » Act IV: The Chase 312
  - » Act V: A Bridge To Heaven 313
  - » Aftermath 316
- Appendices 318
  - » Challenges & Power Sets in this Book 318
  - » Themekits in this Book 320

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CHAPTER 1

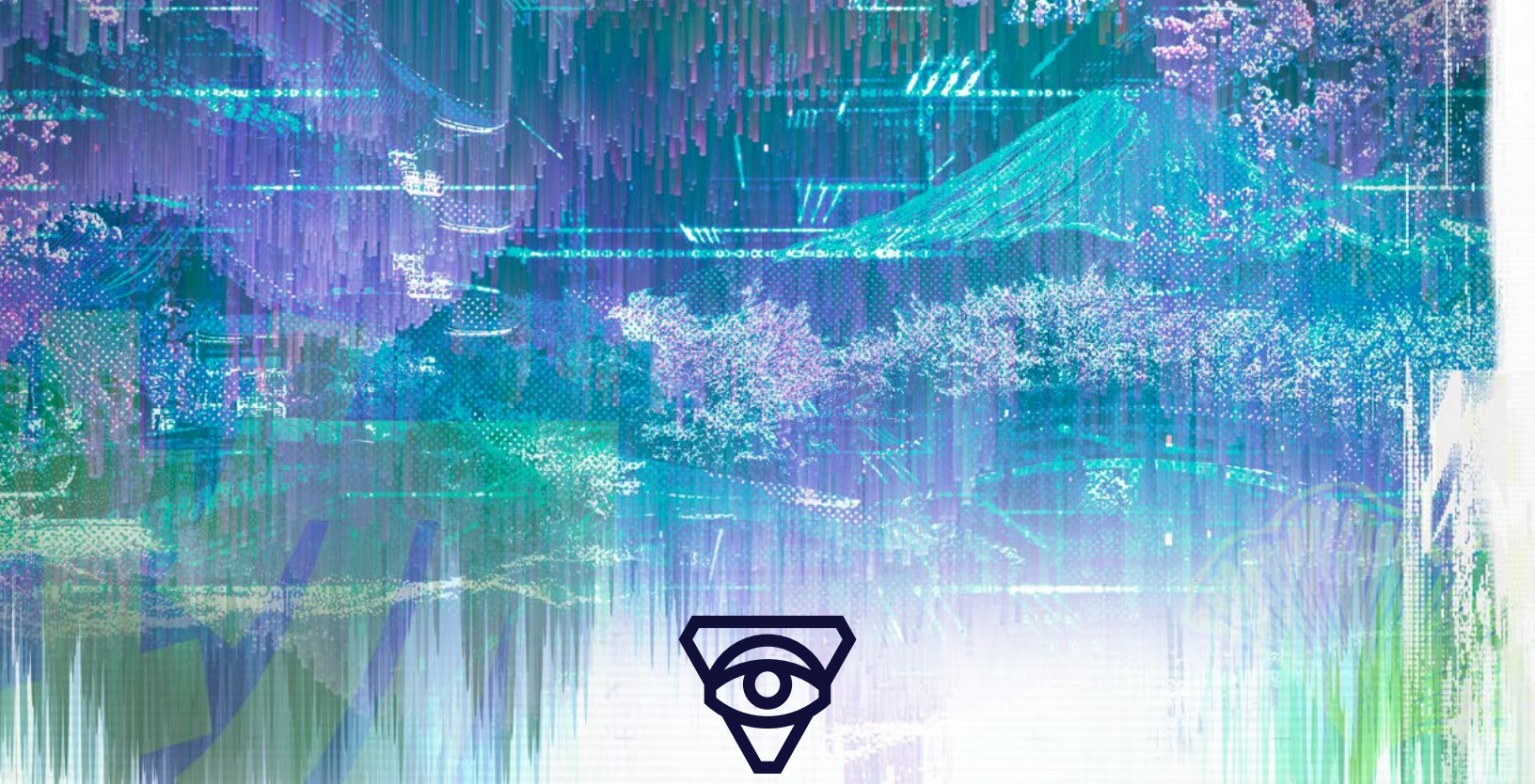
//TOKYO MEGACITY

Setting Information

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THROUGH NEON-LIT TORII GATES

Acidic rain pours down hard upon a businessman as he slumps to the ground, exhausted, while his wet **synthetic hair** implants send error messages, demanding maintenance.

He has missed his train, but that is just the beginning of his long list of losses today. His biggest client has left the company along with his hopes of moving up on the corporate ladder. The man knows that **this is the beginning of the end**. Soon everyone at the office will speak of his lack of competence. As the sun sets and **the holos of his smart suit light up** to cast faint light in the rain, he realizes that he is kneeling before an old roadside shrine; its stone contours shielded from the elements by a sturdy plastic enclosure extending from the nearby bus stop structure. He recognizes the **kami depicted on the shrine's side** as a Dōsojin, a spirit of paths and boundaries. He used to pay respect to these shrines, before his job took over his life. And suddenly the businessman feels a warm light emanating from the stone, and realizes that this spirit of liminality and movement is reaching out to him. As lightning flashes around him, **he hears the spirit talking to him**, speaking of a different life that could be his, far from the meeting rooms and micromanagement. Gripping his briefcase, the man rises.

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An onmyōji inspector dodges behind a concrete pillar and reloads her bureau-issued sidearm. **She feels the presence of her shikigami spirit beside her**, mimicking her stance and taking cover unnecessarily, being immaterial. The inspector looks into the childlike face of her companion spirit and nods. With speed born of practice and desperation, the pair jump out from behind the pillar and **begin their attack on the strange being** haunting the bicycle parkade. The onmyōji inspector, trenchcoat-clad member of the Bureau of Onmyō able to command elemental forces, performs precise hand movements to call upon wood to give her the flexibility to endure. She fires bullet after enchanted bullet out of her sidearm into the screaming ghost-like entity. **The shrieking yōkai howls with pain** and anger, extending its long black hair forward to strangle the onmyōji, but the shikigami flies forward, its tiny arms grasping at the oily black tendrils to protect its master. As the ghostly hair begins to wrap around her throat, the woman **closes her eyes and whispers a final prayer for aid**. Wood's flexibility may not be enough.

Dropping down into an **abandoned sewer line of old Tokyo**, a teenage girl's gaming mask glows azure in the darkness. She stands up slowly, scanning her surroundings. There are very **real dangers in these old ruins**, but what she's worried about isn't exactly real. After a few minutes of exploration she comes upon what she's seeking – what she's afraid of. There in the dark of a sewer junction, **visible only in AR**, is the slumbering body of a vast spider. She draws her weapon, **a katana that does not exist in meatspace**, but in her visor it glows brightly with power, and walks forward bravely towards her foe. Her sword cleaves cleanly through the many spindly limbs of the monster, yet she can sense that something is wrong here. Just as the monster is down to its last few Hit Points, it stabs into her side with its poisonous fangs. Suddenly, she knows all too well that this is something more than just a game – **a hybrid between the imaginary and the magical**. A terrible entity that has found a place for itself down here in the dark, luring young people like her into its clutches through the interface of a game.



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20XX 東京へようこそ
WELCOME TO TOKYO 20XX

Tokyo is the quintessential *:Otherscape* Megacity. The people of Tokyo have long been standing on the cutting edge of technology, while at the same time remaining connected to their mythology and history. With *:Otherscape's* focus on the nuanced interactions between the Noise and the Mythoi, Tokyo serves as the perfect backdrop for cyberpunk stories in which myths come to life.

:Otherscape kicks off at an undetermined point, any number of decades or even centuries from now. This book is not a future history of Japan, but an imagined tapestry upon which the MC and the crew could work together to define your own Tokyo, with idiosyncrasies unique to your own stories.

Don't fret about how soon we'll have cyborgs, androids, or hyper-realistic VR. If a technology is cool and feels right for your fictional version of Tokyo – include it. If it seems plausible that an imaginary chain of events could take this Megacity in a particular dystopian direction that helps you tell mythic cyberpunk stories – go for it.

THE LITTLE GODS THAT NEVER LEFT

Lurking in every abandoned building and under every roadside shrine are the spirits many thought were just myths. The Mythoi of Japan never truly receded into the shadows in the modern age. Japanese culture has – in parts – remained reverent to the myriad deities and supernatural beings of Shinto, Buddhism, and other religions, even if in ritual alone. Thanks to this, Tokyo is now an overt playground for kami (gods) large and small, the strange phenomena of the yōkai, the hauntings of yūrei (ghosts) and akuma (Buddhist demons), and many, many other Mythoi, that have now returned to play a frontline role in shaping the destiny of the Megacity. They are not met with the respect they deserve, however. In all of the Noise, the revered past is considered by millions as nothing but yet another cultural artifact to be consumed, and many once-revered shrines and temples have been lying in ruins for years.

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HARDWARE HAVEN

The near-future of Tokyo is one both improved and ruined by increasing industrialization, mechanization, and technology-fuelled ecological disasters. Everything is automated, everyone is connected. Fed by millenia of intricate artisanship with incredible and sometimes all-consuming attention to detail, the last century has put Japan at the forefront of hardware design, even as manufacturing gradually trickled offshore. From popular personal vehicles to household robotics, from VR gear to exoskeletons, Tokyo is now a hotbed of hard tech ingenuity. Reverence for craft and well-made artifacts is ingrained in local culture, compounded by the fact that in Japanese folklore any item can become a Source if it exists long enough, a phenomenon known as tsukumogami (page 19). This unmatched quality has professionals from all over the world flocking to Tokyo, digitally or in person, to purchase the finest meatspace-crafted hardware. The top market for rare or illicit hardware of any kind is the fabled and nefarious **Ghost Market** (page 159), an AR/VR pop-up cybermarket superimposed on a different meatspace location every night.

EMERGENCY-POWERED CITY-STATE

Japan was the first to mass-utilize nanotech, and the first to get burned by it in a disaster that quite literally reshaped the nation. Dubbing the government response inadequate, Tokyo itself took over all aspects of governance and expanded westwards aggressively while becoming the new *de facto* regime. The Nano-butai (page 25) gained almost limitless jurisdiction that they retain even now, long after the disaster has been contained. This power was quickly siphoned by corrupt officials into unholy covenants with the already-in-league corporate zaibatsus (page 26) and Yakuza crime syndicates (page 27), further subjecting the local population to the unchecked rule of modern-day shoguns and daimyos.

ANGRY SEAS OF NANITES

Throughout history, Japan has seen its share of natural and man-made disasters, and unfortunately climate change and unchecked tech developments have not made things any better. Earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic eruptions, and typhoons batter Tokyo more frequently than ever before, whether due to measurable ecological impact or the resurfacing of furious sea gods and monsters. Quarantined pockets of nanites from the days of the great disaster dot the Megacity, but especially in the adjacent mountainous wilderness, where entire scavenging tribes of displaced and contaminated refugees have re-established ancient lifestyles and resumed worship of forgotten kami of disease. Worse yet, the yōkai and other kami have come to inhabit and corrupt these disaster zones and nanite clouds.

EVERYTHING IS GAME

One of the Megacity's biggest industries is sheer Noise in the form of gaming. From mind-numbing hyper-casual games played in AR with little more than the flick of an eyelid or one's pinky to seizure-inducing platformers and high-octane shooters with professional leagues streaming to global audiences and impossibly immersive VR RPGs that are indistinguishable from real life – it's all made here, laced with that touch of genius that Japanese game visionaries have always had. But as thrill-seeking gamers keep craving higher stakes amid countless "casuals" who sink into a fantasy they never want to leave, the boundaries between life and play are rapidly pixelating and blurring, with deadly results – while being paraded and advertised by the corps as being better than life itself.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK FOR?

Tokyo is a Megacity setting book for *:Otherscape* that provides everything you need to jump right into the game without having to put together your own setting. Within these pages you'll find an extrapolation of what Tokyo could become in a sci-fi near future, with a big cybernetic eye aimed towards how the various cultural elements of Japan might look like in an increasingly supernatural setting. Here we explore what might happen if the kami, gods, and monsters of Japanese legend were to exist alongside corporate warlords, nanotech disasters, and Yakuza gangs.

The point of this book is to do the bulk of the heavy lifting for you, whether you're an MC or a player. This means we provide cultural and baseline setting guides (in this chapter), useful player options (see Chapter 2), Challenges and Power Sets of supernatural threats from Japanese mythology in their cyberpunk versions (see Chapter 3), detailed operations of Key Players running the Tokyo Megacity (see Chapter 4), and finally a host of fun jobs to send your crews on (see Chapter 5).

But this book is not exhaustive. Tokyo is a sprawling Megacity with an untold number of stories and details waiting to be explored and invented. Make this rain-drenched, neon-lit, place your own. If you've got a cool idea, add it to your Tokyo!

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BUREAUCRATIC ONMYŌJI AND OTAKU SAMURAI

When the yōkai strike from the shadows, somebody's got to lay their life on the line to protect Tokyo's citizens. The government office for dealing with the supernatural, the **Bureau of Onmyō** (page 151), raises its head after many years of being pushed to the sidelines. It rapidly gains momentum and power, albeit not nearly enough to handle the explosion of Source-related crimes in the Megacity. Zaibatsus deploy their heartless black ops teams for surgical power grabs in the old districts, seeking to exploit Relics and active Thin Place shrines. The largely-discarded and Source-rich district of Old Tokyo has become a new battleground for those who are paying attention to the Mythoi comeback. A grassroots movement of nerdy samurai wannabes, the self-dubbed "**Neo-Samurai**" (page 177), are the only remaining line of defense for these sacred places, but whether they can live by the code of their honorable namesakes remains to be seen.

ROBOTS & MECHS

Owing to its place as a leader in robotics, the Tokyo Megacity has become home to millions of robotic units, from manufacturing machines to domestic "waifu" or "husbando" substitutes. While most of these are insentient machines driven by basic code or weak AIs that only simulate a mind, many are powered by increasingly self-aware AIs or become hosts for rogue AIs who seek to experience meatspace and the self-definition that comes with a localized body. To add to that, robotics are widely used in well-funded operations in construction, corporate warfare, and yōkai extermination, sparking a race for better, bigger, and stronger mechas which is bleeding over into street culture, such as the **Kumo Crawler Races** (page 234).

PLAYING ELSEWHERE IN JAPAN

This book combines Tokyo-specific locations and Mythoi with elements of the greater Japanese culture. You can use most of the information here to set your Megacity elsewhere in Japan, whether as a counterforce to the encroaching and self-governed Tokyo Megacity described in this book or as part of a completely alternative timeline and focus for your series. However, you may wish to replace some of the Tokyo-specific content with local legends hailing from your chosen Japanese city or region.



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THE LAY OF THE LAND

The Tokyo of *:Otherscape* is not a single city, it's a hundred. Stretching from Tokyo's original Kanto region all the way to the Sea of Japan on the western coastline, eating up the entire width of the island of Honshu, the Megacity is made up of countless different centers, criss-crossed by train tracks, power lines, and hidden rivers in underground channels.

Only the famous Japanese mountains refused to yield, standing as a stark, dark background to the Megacity's endless buzz of neon and holograms.

Abusing the emergency powers granted by the Nanotech Disaster (page 14), the Tokyo government allowed itself to expand the city's reach, and prefectures that wanted to survive had no choice but to join the municipal zone.

INTERCONNECTED CULTURAL HUBS

Much like cyberspace, Tokyo doesn't have a single center. It's a cobweb of interesting places, made of cultural, technological, and administrative centers, differentiating themselves through specialization. Each has a texture, a style, and a focus, and each is known for its local eccentricities and attractions; most also have cute mascots that have the unsettling tendency to host invasive yōkai. Some places are tourist paradises, some cater to shoppers of a specific class, some are residential blocks, oases of calm in a city known for its bustling daylife and nightlife. One can be "sapient appliance city", where they sell only frighteningly intelligent devices, while another is "VR murder-games center", home to dozens of violence-experience vendors.

LOYAL TO MY TOWN – OR MY BOSS

Denizens of Tokyo are much more likely to identify themselves with their local district than the Megacity at large, with people on the street wearing local fashion and AR advertisements appealing to local customs and well-known local features. At the heart of the business centers, an aggressive office culture dominates the workers' lives, most of whom feel an anxious need to blend in by wearing corporate colors and adhering to corp values, in the process alienating themselves from their family and childhood friends. Long commutes prove your loyalty and dedication to your corporate masters.

TRAIN STATION TOWNS

Tokyo's scattered centers are connected by deadly-fast yet silent maglev trains, destined for destinations at sometimes crumbling transit stations. Increasingly prevalent earthquakes make underground tunnels unreliable, and so surface trains are the mass transport of choice, with each main station serving a local town within the Megacity. Train rides can last from minutes to hours (in some antiquated backwater lines), after which emerging from the train station into the new community can feel like landing on another world. Each such "train station town" has its own flavors of Noise, with smells of yatai (stall vendors) street food, industrial waste, harsh perfume, or the faint scent of petrichor given off by cybernetics.

FURTHER AWAY FROM THE STATION

Cars are a luxury and streets are tight, with most people using gyrobikes or neighborhood maglev lines to move about. As one distances themselves from the main stations, old residential buildings begin to line the streets, with similarly neglected shrines hiding in corners or behind trash heaps. Even further away from the stations, ancient kami become more common, spirits of the land that occasionally integrate into everyday life. Beyond that, entire forgotten districts exist where train lines no longer reach, lawless lands controlled by criminal elements or monstrous yōkai, like the Wild West of another Myth.

RUINS OF OLD TOKYO

What was once the heart of Tokyo suffered several such disasters in the past, and has stood abandoned and neglected for years. The ruins of the old capital, previously an international center of commerce full of famous tourist sites, now serve as a warzone for gangland violence, where Source hunters go searching for forgotten treasures and attempt to avoid the corporate black ops units protecting outlawed experiments. Some of Japan's oldest cultural artifacts are waiting to be found in these ruins, with several being held by the burgeoning **Neo-Samurai** movement (page 177), while many others remain locked away in museums and hidden vaults. These testaments to the past glories of Tokyo are now only preserved until the next disaster, ignored out of ignorance as the Noise keeps the populace from caring too much, or even a little, about their past.

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SECRETS IN THE MOUNTAINS

Out in the mountainous wildernesses that hem in the Megacity, survivors and scavengers eke out an existence of raiding and exploring the ruins of Tokyo's earlier iterations, but hiding in the old laboratories and housing complexes are secrets better left undiscovered. Biological and nanotechnological experiments lie dormant for now, posing an imminent threat to the survival of Tokyo and its populace. These are not the only dangers lurking here however, as magical creatures, the yōkai, now seize these outlands for their own purposes and crawl into every underground crevice that Tokyo stopped caring about.

ZEN VS. NOISE

The Megacity of Tokyo crackles with the Noise of augmented reality, and the environment is saturated with information, video game elements, and business signs. Metrics, advertisements, and communication data flows are so constant that moments of silence can be quite jarring. Due to faulty utility services and mismatched communication standards, or perhaps due to underlying Mythic forces at play, Tokyo has many dead zones, where digital or electrical infrastructure has failed or is so dense that it cancels itself out. These breaks in the flow of Noise feel like moments of Zen-like clarity, when reflection is finally possible, touching something real through the unending façade. Many find such momentary loss of data troublesome or discomforting, and avoid them. Data addiction is common in the Tokyo Megacity, where a lack of feed can feel like losing access to air or light. Others can be empowered by this silence, where they are finally able to tap into realms long untouched by human consciousness that are nevertheless the legacy of Japan's monks and ascetics.

SURROUNDED BY A STORMY SEA

Combined with the carbon fallout of nanotech warfare, the weather in Tokyo can be ruthlessly harsh and change without warning. Climate change has hit the island-based nation hard, challenging its many maritime operations and industries. Local disasters are an everyday occurrence, with sudden electric storms breaking up communications and disrupting travel, or underground reservoirs flooding entire neighborhoods. The coastal parts of the Megacity require constant maintenance and every year sees two or three tsunami storms that leave behind hundreds of bodies and thousands of homeless.

THE NANOTECH DISASTER

Nanotech is taboo in Tokyo. Unregulated advancements in nanotechnology have resulted in several disasters, and at some point in the recent past Japan suffered a major nanite accident. A research center run by a biotechnology and geo-engineering conglomerate accidentally let loose a powerfully mutagenic and self-replicating nanite swarm, and millions died in the resulting catastrophe.

Nanotechnology has since been curtailed and largely outlawed, although the megacorps, who fear losing the race to the competition aboard, are doing their best to change public opinion and regulations.



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A HARDWARE SOLUTION TO EVERY PROBLEM

The Japan of *:Otherscape* is a world tech leader, particularly when it comes to hardware: cybernetics, robotics, and consumer electronics. Hyper-specialization is a common business practice, with entire companies devoted to the development of a single cybernetic component or a weapon add-on.

When a consumer wants something, they search for a gadget or device that resolves that specific need, often heading to a city dedicated to that particular type of technology. These specialized devices are called tamatebako, "jeweled boxes" or "coffins", and provide hardware solutions that in other countries would be handled through software. The computer dens of Japanese hackers are typically covered in networks of tamatebako cabled together, each box dimly glowing with data screens and blinking indicators.

TOKYO'S HYPERACTIVE CYBERSPACE

Tokyo's Tangle of cyberspace Domains is incredibly popular. With the Japanese being early adopters of the online lifestyle and VR advances, many current users are the 4th or 5th generation living online, with a proud heritage of legacy assets and online communities. The Tangle is a lot less secure than most realize, though, since several rogue AI, Mythoi, or Mythoi-AI syntheses have established strongholds throughout it, despite the authorities' best efforts. **Great King Enma** (page 168), for instance, heads an online ethics movement while hijacking advanced surveillance devices to implement a system of moral tests to challenge the wicked. An online VR paradise known as **Tokoyo** (page 210) promises immortality and an end to mortal suffering, with some of its adherents developing a cult-like behavior.

HANKO CRYPTO SEAL

A thick layer of data exchanges forms the basis of the Megacity's cyberspace, and much of it runs on hanko cryptosecurity. Japanese culture has for hundreds of years used the formality of hanko stamps and forms as a means of finding organizational harmony and consensus, and in the modern Megacity each person is expected to carry their private seal, a cylindrical fob which acts as a wallet and identification document. Most people leave theirs at home, because hanko stamps are mostly used digitally in AR and cyberspace, but regulations demand that wherever authentication is required, a hanko could also be physically pressed onto an appropriate receiver, thus providing proof of identity even if the net is down. A person's hanko is so integral to their daily life, that the seals are starting to gain mystic powers (**Hanko Seals**, page 230).

JAPANESE NAMING CONVENTIONS

In Japan, it is customary to address and write a person's surname first and given name second. e.g., Murakami Haruki and not Haruki Murakami. In this book, we use this convention for all Japanese names. Western names are written in a Western convention, i.e., given name first and surname second.

More often than not, people address each other by their surnames, with an addition of a suffix. The most common ones are: -san, to a person of about equal social rank; -kun, to a male child or social inferior (not derogative); -chan, to very young children (of all genders) and to girls, also used among friends (usually female-oriented) as an endearing quality; -sama, to politely address a socially superior person. While honorifics are an important part of the language and of its use in cultural context, we do not use honorifics in this book because we do not expect (or recommend) English-speaking players to use them during the game.

A ROBOT IN EVERY HOME

Down every street, the sky, the roadway, and even the sidewalk is littered with robotic drones, big and small. Many families have a robotic servant or pet and every industry uses them as a cheap form of labor. Robotics have evolved at such a rapid pace that Tokyo now plays host to an entire class of android beings with complex programming bordering on the self-aware. Some expensive luxury models even look and sound just like living human beings. Currently without rights, these androids are seen by some as conscious enough to be considered slaves, private property that is put to the same tasks that low-wage workers once did. Most androids are programmed to accept their lowly status, but there are some who learn to overcome their imprinted protocols or gain a new perspective courtesy of

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an activist virus or rebellious Source. Consequently, unrest by both androids and robot rights activists is beginning to grow. This is heightened by the relative openness in Japanese society towards robots and the general acceptance of robots as individuals with whom humans can and should have social connections, encouraging many human activists to join the fight for robot rights. The degree to which this unrest has affected the Megacity is left to you to decide.

JAPANESE LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Japanese has no closed syllables (apart from syllables ending with the "n" sound). All other syllables are open, a consonant (or consonant cluster) followed by a vowel. Japanese has five vowels, which can be approximated as follows: "a" as in "father", "i", as in "macaroni"; "u" as in "zulu"; "e", as in "extra"; and "o", as in "solo".

Some vowels, however, can be longer than others. A long vowel is marked with a macron (a horizontal line) above the vowel. e.g., "kyodai" means giant, while "kyōdai" means sibling.

When two similar syllables follow each other, and are meant to be pronounced separately, they will be separated via an apostrophe. e.g., the name "An'ichi" (an-ichi).

As for the pronunciation of the consonants, most are similar enough to English. One exception is the "R" consonant, which is much closer to the English "L" sound (with a dash of "D").

As a rule, Japanese names and words are written according to their formal phonetic expression. The exception, however, are Japanese words and names that became international and in common use in vernacular English. For example, Tokyo is not written Tōkyō, even though it is the correct Japanese pronunciation.

Most Japanese names and words we chose to use in the book have a strong connection to the rich folklore, history, and culture of Japan. We encourage you to look for our many easter eggs that will make you smile, think, and deepen your experience of the game.

HONOR AMONG MERCS

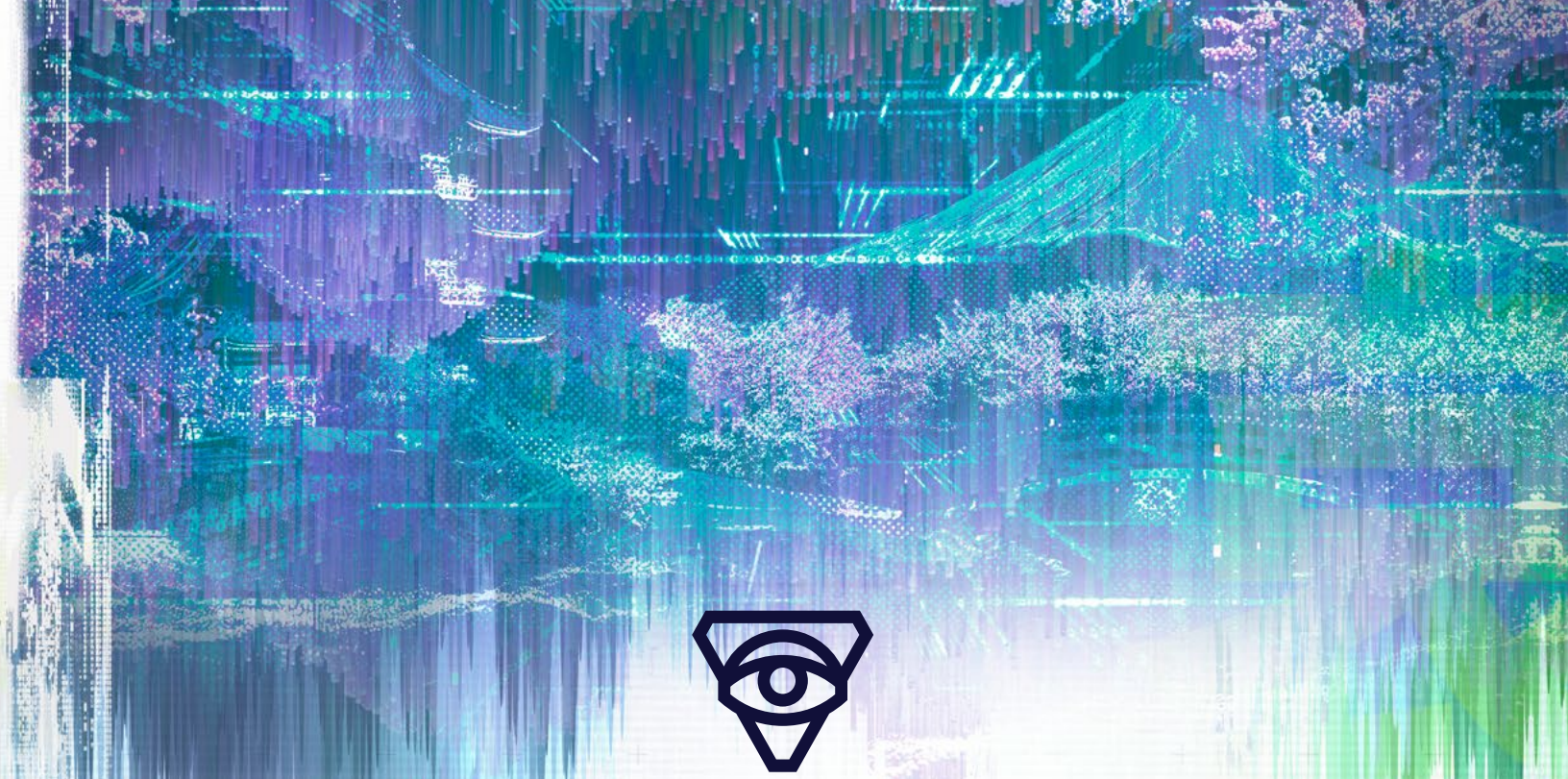
Like other Megacities, Tokyo has a thriving mercenary community, providing specialists who fall through the cracks of society the opportunity to get rich by putting their skills to use.

In Tokyo, the system of assigning mercenary work is highly stratified, a hierarchical model based on respect and reputation. Developed around Confucian ideals of respect for elders and higher ups, Tokyo mercs have a stronger sense of purpose than in other Megacities. The utmost respect is given to the senior freelancers and teams, who often move up from dangerous work into roles as fixers, handlers, and mentors to the next generation of mercs.

A SEMI-STRICT STRUCTURE

The elders within mercenary society are called shugo (military governors). They serve as intermediaries between crews and employers, and occasionally as representatives of their entire "job market" to the corporations, the government, and even in the media. Beginner mercs, who usually start out without support or patronage, are called chimpira, a name borrowed from the Yakuza. Established mercenaries are called bushi (warriors) and their crews are often called buke (military family). Thanks to their proven professionalism, they are considered both soldiers for hire and keepers of a code of honorable conduct. Employers rarely trust individuals who have not associated themselves with crews of other mercs, or who lack the backing of a senior merc.

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STREETS OF KAMI

Most magical occurrences in Japan are entwined with the kami. "Kami" is an extremely broad term, encompassing everything from gods to mischievous spirits and the ghosts of revered dead. Virtually any supernatural being, particularly what a Westerner might think of as spirits, is kami, and they come in a great variety throughout Japanese mythology.

As these beings return, they meld with the futuristic Tokyo landscape and lifestyle. Those that play tricks find ways to alter AR experiences. Those that kill become murderous personal devices. Cyberspace is a new frontier for the kami to explore, and they find the already symbolic nature of digital entities easy to blend in with, subvert, and take over – many of the entities in the Tokyo Tangle are more magic than data. Some kami now manifest both physically and as an AR avatar, or shift between a corporeal form and a VR form in the blink of an eye.

RESPECT THE KAMI

The Tokyo streets are possessed, enchanted, and corrupted. There are many, many kinds of spirits in the Megacity: ancestral souls, local tutelary beings, small deities that inhabit natural places, and even the very gods of Japanese legend. They are all called kami, especially those who are nicer, respected, or revered. Those who are loathed and feared are called yōkai – but kami of all kinds should be handled with caution. They are not human, and their desires might include the kinds of far-fetched plots that beings that once ruled the known world would come up with, from enlightening the entirety of Tokyo to transforming humanity into revenant ghosts.

A great many kami serve to teach a lesson for or against particular kinds of behavior, although the contexts of these warnings are now long forgotten in the Megacity. As these cautionary tales come to life, few understand what it is they are required to do to placate these spirits. Shinto priests and others who know the ways of the kami are few and far between, making such expertise sought after by those who would take on the more dangerous of these spirits, such as the inspectors of the **Bureau of Onmyō** (page 151).

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In Japanese mythology, most kami cannot be classified as good or evil; however, there are those that are usually hostile, or murderous. Even the kinder ones can cause trouble if they move out of their "proper" place in the spirit world, out of curiosity or to fulfill some desire. A kami that is unsatisfied can also manifest in an *ara-mitama* aspect, its "wild soul", which needs to be pacified in some manner. And even though most kami were not originally malicious, their seclusion from the world of mortals made many of them petty, feeling scorned or disrespected. The sacred places and temples of such kami are now tainted, spewing foul magics and producing dangerous yōkai.

FEAR THE YŌKAI

The yōkai, being spirits of mischief, destruction, and death, are the most likely to wrap their metaphorical and literal tentacles around the Megacity. From the impossibly expensive board rooms of the megacorps to the darkest drug dens and grimy alleyways, various types of yōkai try to push themselves into others' dealings. The people of Tokyo now fear more than just the local gang violence and the harsh realities of their economic class. The night is crawling with dangerous and sinister creatures, looking to twist the Megacity towards their own unknown ends.

It can be said that the difference between a kami and a yōkai has little to do with the being itself, and more with their relationship to humans. The revered spirits are called kami, while loathed spirits are called yōkai. These relations can change on an individual basis, and a demon can become a god, yet most yōkai are simply trouble. Think of yōkai as those kami that are most likely to be Challenges that a player crew might face. You'll find quite a few in **Chapter 3: //YŌKAI DATABASE**.

To get a better handle on the wide variety that they come in, here are a few general types of kami and yōkai.

AKUMA

Akuma are fiery devils who torment the wicked, deriving from Buddhist teachings about the nature of the afterlife. Though only a few have appeared in Tokyo, those that have are among the most feared yōkai. Agents of destruction and moral righteousness, they have come to torment the living, rather than the dead. They see most citizens of this corrupt world as guilty by default of their environment and deserving of punishment, often in the form of physical and emotional pain.

DRAGONS

Snaking their way through much of Japanese folklore, dragons (called ryū or tatsu) take a variety of horrific and beautiful forms. The majority were once the serpentine protectors of particular streams, islands, lakes, or ponds. Since those natural spaces are now quite rare, dragons have begun taking residence in other watery places, such as waste treatment plants and city aqueducts. The man-made canals that crisscross coastal areas of Tokyo sometimes serve as Thin Places, where these creatures hold power. They are associated with rainfall and can be benevolent if given appropriate respect and gratitude, but few remember the proper rites that please them.

ONI

Oni are yōkai that take the muscle bound form of massive demons, sometimes described as trolls or ogres. An oni of legend is a giant brute with skin of a very bright color (such as blue or red). They typically carry a massive iron club, or tetsubo, for a weapon. Oni have returned to Tokyo in several different forms, depending on their Source. Some are motorcyclist gang members who have worn masks that turn them into violent oni (**Oni Motorcycle Gangs**, page 185). Others are servants of Buddhist kami, such as **Great King Enma** (page 168), who forge them from the unredeemable. Oni are feared not only for their strength, but also for their brutality and desire for violence.

SHAPESHIFTERS & ANTHROPOMORPHIC ANIMALS

There are countless kami that are able to change shape into animals or take on a few of their attributes. Humans might become influenced by such Mythoi through items of power or the magic in a Thin Place, but these kami can also manifest fully as emanations of such places and objects, causing chaos until the offending Source can be identified. A few common examples of animal yōkai include the trickster kitsune fox spirits, the cunning tanuki raccoon dogs, and the spider spirits tsuchigumo. Other yōkai, who are usually bigger and more dangerous, are less likely to shapeshift and instead wear a single anthropomorphic form. These include the bird-like tengu who control the winds and fly among skyscrapers, and the turtle-like kappa who attempt to drown swimmers in pools and sewage lagoons.

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SHIKIGAMI

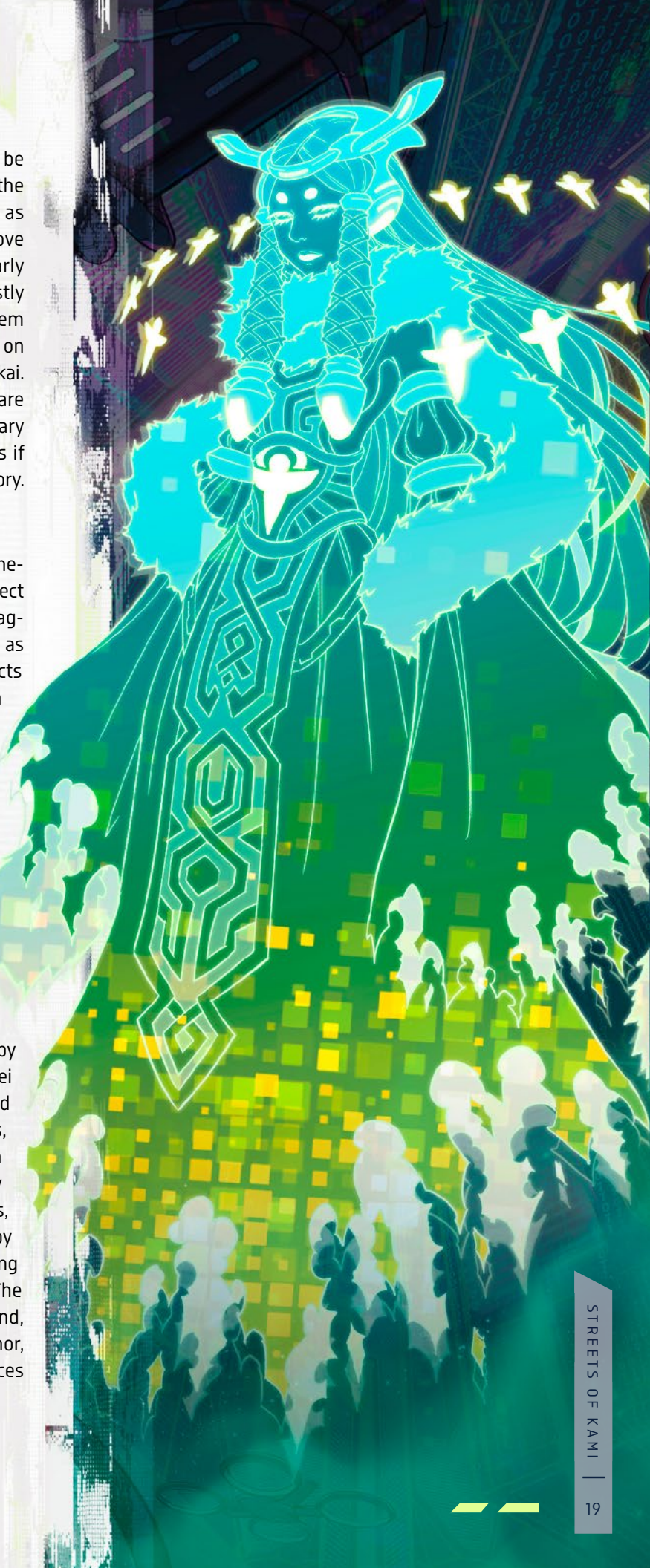
Shikigami is a broad classification of spirits that can be summoned and bound through rituals. Inspectors of the Bureau of Onmyō traditionally bind such a spirit to act as a sidekick or partner in their investigations, and to prove their mastery over the arcane. These shikigami regularly take the form of a shadowy being in the shape of a ghostly bird or child. The leaders of the Bureau of Onmyō use them to conduct supernatural surveillance, gathering secrets on their political foes and scouring the city for dangerous yōkai. The most powerful shikigami are called *shikiōji*. These are great spirits capable of curing plagues and other legendary feats, but their summoning can cause great problems if done incorrectly, and none has been called in living memory.

TSUKUMOGAMI

Possessions that have existed for at least a century sometimes acquire a spirit of their own, often granting the object supernatural powers or properties. Nearly anything imaginable has the potential to become a tsukumogami and as the Mythoi become more prevalent some of these objects have become sought after on the black market. Though in the past these were items of great antiquity, the fact that the digital age is a little over a century old means that tsukumogami can even be found in throwback electronics. Not all tsukumogami are helpful though. Angered spirits can take over such objects and make them into cursed items, bringing only misery and death to their owners.

YŪREI

Ghosts of the dead, yūrei, are a staple of Japanese mythology and folklore, and they take several different roles with a variety of names. Sorei are ancestor spirits who are still revered by their descendants. Some are absorbed into a greater sorei collective of the family's ancestors, while others could be deified and become kami. Onryō are twisted souls, holding on to existence due to a tortured obsession, often vengeance. Japanese mythology has a separate category for vengeful ghosts of the aristocracy or samurai classes, called goryō. These spirits were once greatly feared by emperors and other leaders, who believed they were being haunted by those they had harmed through politics. The **Neo-Samurai** (page 177) seek noble spirits of any kind, who can sometimes be accessed through swords, armor, and other symbols of the samurai that serve as Sources for their power.



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NEW SOURCE TYPE: EMOTION

Japanese myth places great importance on negative emotions, imbuing them with spiritual power. Some places can become "clogged up" by unwanted emotions, and block the natural flow of spiritual energy.

This corruption can then turn kami into yōkai, or attract misfortune. A blockage can form because of some drastic local event, but more commonly they accumulate over many months or years, because of gossip, unsocial behavior, or even a single person feeling extremely slighted, abused, or jealous.

There are many stories about emotions running out of control, with dire supernatural consequences. A moody teen might channel the power of a yōkai of despair, while an angry corporate manager could inadvertently become corrupted by a vengeful yūrei, enflaming his fury.

While powerful emotions may draw the attention of the kami, these spirits can also influence a place, object, or person in such a way that emotions are heightened or certain feelings are more prevalent. This could create a feedback loop in which the corruptive influence of certain kami (often dangerous yōkai) can inhabit a person. The emotion in question then becomes a Source for that spirit's Mythos.

As a Source, any emotion strong enough can allow a Mythos that resonates with it to manifest. The Mythos may either Touch people, places, or items near the emotional focal point and affect or imbue them with Mythic powers, or emerge whole cloth from the Otherscape as a Conjuration.

EMOTIONAL TAINT IN PLAY

When this happens to NPCs, this can turn them into Challenges with the **Tainted Power Set** (page 137). If a player character becomes connected to a yōkai through a powerful emotion, they could gain the *tainted* status or even take on an appropriate Mythos theme. Some of the theme kits presented in Chapter 2 represent such an influence, such as the Figurine of Corruption (page 60).

Bear in mind that a Mythos theme does not necessarily describe a Source, rather it's a representation of the powers that the Source provides. Also, while an emotional Source might be the feeling that arose within the character, it can also be an emotional taint of a place, on an item, or of a skillset, that "rubs off" the character. Thus, a player character could have an Exposure theme from the rage bleeding off of a corrupted kami, a Companion theme with a cat turned magical by a friendship shrine that emanates happiness, an Artifact theme for a nunchaku instilled with bloodlust due to the cruelty of its previous owner, or an Esoterica theme representing the erudite enlightenment conferred by the calm ghost that haunts the ruins of an old bookstore.

Conversely, those who strive to purge themselves of emotion likewise reject this taint. In NPCs this could take the form of the Zen-Enlightened Power Set (page 138); player characters might pick up the Cleanse The Past Horizon theme kit (page 55) or the Zenlike Peace Exposure theme kit (page 65).

DO YOU HAVE A PERMIT FOR THAT OFUDA?

Magic is slowly resurfacing around Tokyo. While local legends are being exploited and twisted by megacorp greed, some rare individuals are starting to seek the meaning behind the aesthetics – and in that meaning, they find power.

These are everyday people who manage a bit of magic to help them get by, with a brief moment of belief through all the Noise. A student might practice her family's warding hand gestures, trusting in her ancestors' teaching to keep away distractions during a test. Those who manage to care enough to pray at their local shrine might receive its spirit's blessing of good fortune for the day. And as the yōkai return, the few in Tokyo who are more detached from the Noise look for the old ways to keep the monsters at bay, turning to the more powerful kami for guidance and remembering a time long ago when priests aided them in purification rituals.

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Words have power, and it's not uncommon for writing in kanji to spontaneously appear in midair around a magician as they prepare their spells. Holy words written on paper can form seals: powerful warding enchantments that can freeze, banish, dissolve, or otherwise influence the kami or yōkai they're attached to. Important symbols include the **magatama**, a stone in the shape of a comma or a stylized drop, or one of half of a Yin-Yang, which can be a conduit for power, and **torii gates**, that are said to stand at the boundary between the physical world and the realm of the spiritual.

ONMYŌDŌ

Several groups in Tokyo make conscious, everyday use of magical practices. The Japanese government has had a bureau devoted to keeping an eye on the yōkai for centuries, the **Bureau of Onmyō** (page 151) – and as the yōkai threat reemerges, so too has this ancient order of bureaucrats and mystics began to raise its head. Though underfunded and marginalized, the Bureau has managed to keep hold of numerous sorcerous secrets and possesses several useful libraries on magical workings.

Bureau inspectors are the equivalent of beat cops, empowered mostly to issue fines and handle local feuds, but ill-equipped to fight the biggest dangers. They are knowledgeable, however, and thanks to their familiarity with the enemy they serve as the Megacity's main line of defense against the supernatural, staving off destruction by beings others don't even notice. The onmyōji inspectors practice rituals and wards that aid them in tracking and subduing monsters, with the help of **ofuda**, single-use spell-prayers inscribed onto paper slips created by the Bureau's learned scribes. Their perspective on the magical world is derived from an understanding of the balance between elements, and their actions can at times seem indirect and mysterious, since they strive to tame the spiritual forces of the Megacity rather than destroy them outright.

SHUGENDŌ AND THE YAMABUSHI

In the mountainous wastes that surround Tokyo, groups of monks called Yamabushi**,** who have always shunned the ways of progress and the Noise, still practice their ancient religion of Shugendō. This blend of Tantric Buddhism and Shinto focuses on the cleansing power of ascetic life in harsh environs, to seek purification and enlightenment. These monks dress in white robes which signify their stepping into the realm of the dead as they leave the materialism of the cities behind. The purification rituals of the Yamabushi can disrupt even the most potent of the yōkai that haunt the wastes, and are even capable of warding off nanotechnological diseases. Secluded, and averse to leaving their distant abodes, what few connections remain between them and the Megacity grow weaker each day. Yet their ways often attract those who seek enlightenment or just an escape from the Noise. Overwhelmed executives and other wealthy elites go on expensive pilgrimages and retreats to learn to tune out the Megacity's distractions.

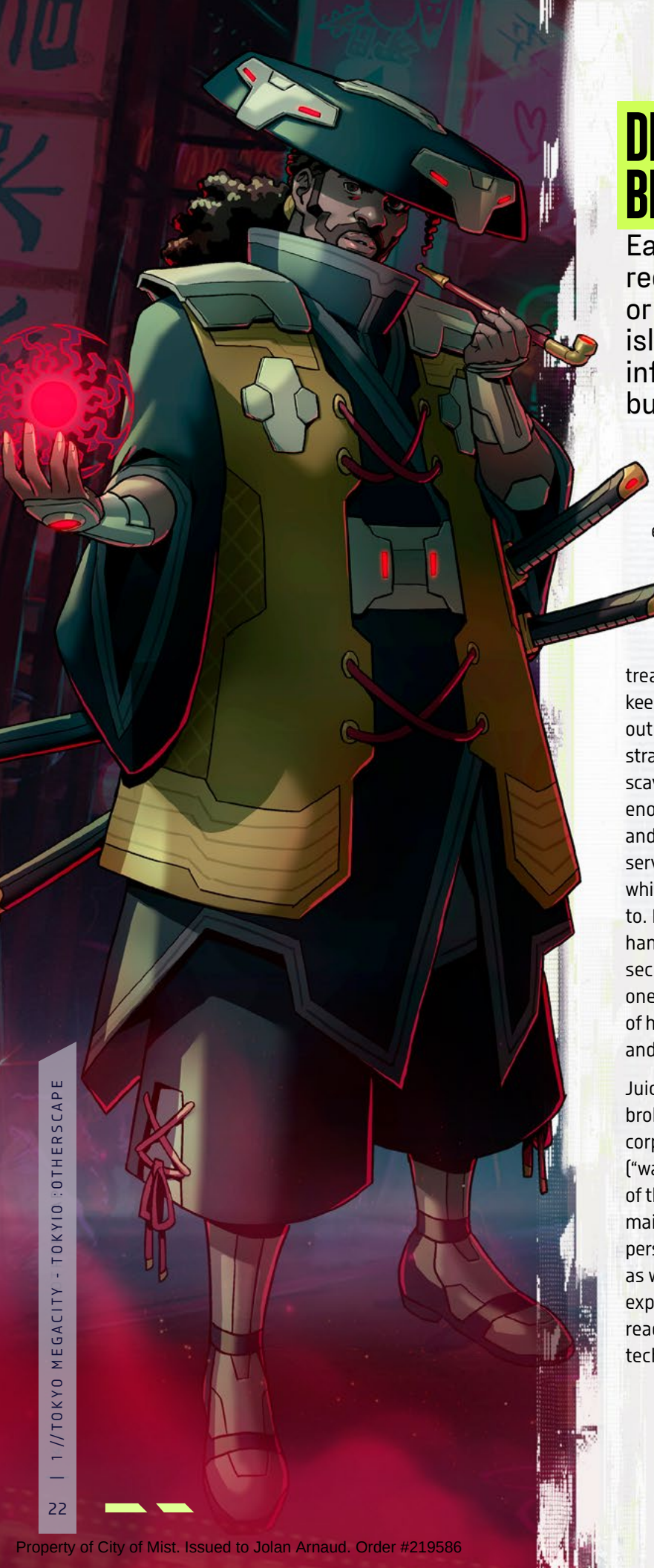
HANKO SEALS MAGIC

Several entirely new forms of magic have begun to emerge in Tokyo, evolving out of reimagined practices of old. The power of true names can now be accessed through **hanko** (signature stamps used to create seals), which hold a strong connection to the soul of the person the stamp was made for (**Hanko Seals**, page 230). This wasn't always the case, but the rise of hanko stamps as cryptographic signature devices has made them come to represent a person in so many ways that holding one is akin to holding a person's very spirit. Practices around the hanko are still early in their development, a kind of underground area of occult study known only to those who frequent esoteric shops.

TEZUMA

Another such example is **tezuma** (also called wazuma), a kind of stage magic that combines story, metaphor, dance, and music into a coherent whole (page 235). Tezuma illusionists are typically found performing in entertainment parlors, but many put their skills to use on the streets of the Megacity, for good or ill. The very best create illusions that hide or change the appearance of buildings or change streets into acts of theater. It is not unknown for corps to have a tezuma on the payroll capable of creating illusions that hide the evidence of corporate conflict or malfeasance that would bring them to the attention of the authorities and the media.

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DESERTED TEMPLES BENEATH YOUR FEET

Each time the architects of Tokyo redesign a section of the Megacity or annex a new prefecture of the island of Honshu, older buildings and infrastructure are paved over and built around in order to save time and cut costs.

The Megacity gradually ratchets upward, strung across the bones of its own past. In some cases such efforts entirely encapsulate the previous neighborhoods and structures, walling them off from the world until they are rediscovered by scavengers and urban explorers decades later.

Many such delvers exist, for there are countless treasures to be found below. The people of Tokyo are so keen on the latest advances, that many products are thrown out after mere months of use, and these accumulate in the strata below the streets. Obsolete technologies are not only scavengable for raw materials, but they are often antiquated enough to be immune to more modern computer viruses and intrusion methods. Ancient tamatebako can provide services that would ordinarily be managed by the corps, but which their users do not want to attract any undue attention to. For example, you really don't want to trust them with handling your safehouse's power grid. Some of the most secure systems are those built around older tech, not new ones, and field operatives can appreciate any sturdy piece of hardware that has survived a few decades underground and is likely immune to the current generation of exploits.

Juiciest of all prizes are those sought out by information brokers. Tokyo has gone through many decades of ruthless corporate warfare that some compare to the Sengoku Jidai ("warring states period") of the samurai. The buried evidence of these battles and power plays can still be used as blackmail or vital intel on Key Players active in the Megacity. Illicit personal dealings, connections with unlawful organizations, as well as massacres, bombings, and widespread medical experimentation are all evident in these encrypted files, ready to be rediscovered, not to mention all of the useful technical schematics and research data.

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A spiritual world is also buried beneath the suburbs. As the Noise grew and the people lost respect for their old ways, many Shinto temples, monasteries, and shrines were among the first to be abandoned and sealed off underground. These places of worship and reverence towards the kami make for natural Thin Places, where reality is often warped because of magical bleedover. The kami of these spiritual sites are now quite active, in some cases sending lesser spirits out into the surrounding ruins to do their bidding. Explorers or those who are unlucky enough to stumble into these areas are often changed by their exposure to the supernatural. Objects in those places too are changed, becoming relics capable of calling upon the powers that infuse them. There are many Sources in the depths.

While innocent scavengers do exist, more often than not one can expect aggressive competition from corp-funded Source hunters, maddened cultists, power hungry occultists, and other wild-eyed souls seeking magical solutions to their woes. Many power-seekers are happy to become pawns of angry yōkai who desire vengeance against the futuristic world that has abandoned their respect and worship. Cultists find that not only are the shrines and temples they discover useful sources of magical blessings, but that they are excellent places to hide their sometimes sinister deeds from the world above. Some still venture up to the surface to find more recruits, potential victims for their darker rites, or simply to find clean food. When the Bureau of Onmyō can spare the manpower, it seeks out such corrupted shrines and the violent cults that seem to constantly spring up around them.



HAUNTED CASTLES & RECLUSIVE ENCLAVES

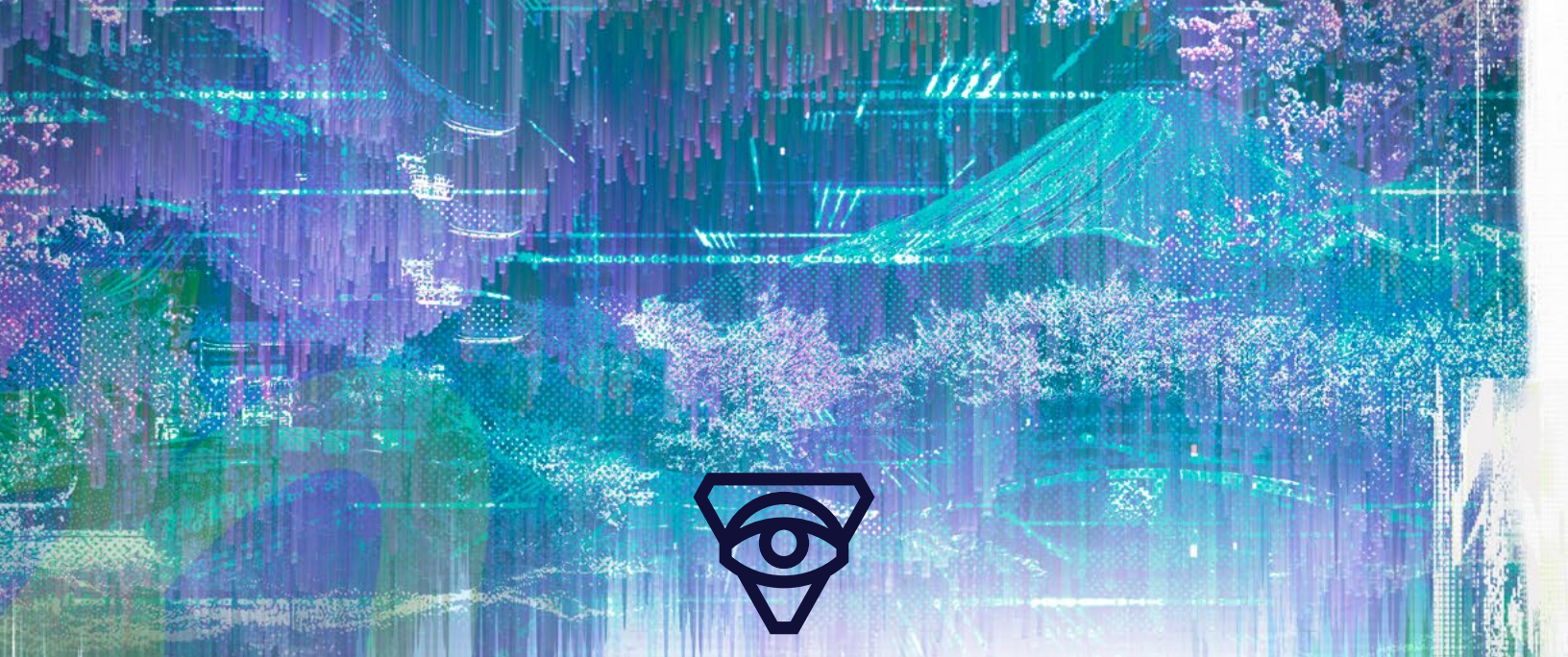
The most impressive, powerful, and dangerous sites beneath the Megacity are the castles of old. They can be found throughout the Megacity, some paved over while others serving as foundations for new construction.

Others were rescued from destruction by wealthy investors, and moved to mountain hideaways, corporate skyscrapers, or the vast private parks of Tokyo's wealthy elite; the Japanese have a ship-of-Theseus way of thinking about castles and similar architecture, considering them more of an institution than just objects. They can be rebuilt and become as authentic as the "original" was, even if moved to a different location altogether.

This continuity of identity and metaphor acts like catnip for kami and yūrei, drawing them in troves, with spirits even fighting among themselves over the right to inhabit a castle. What were once bastions against the wars of a prior age now seem to collect yūrei like maggots on a corpse. Vengeful spirits and souls that seem lost and confused wander the halls and battlements, shrieking into the darkness. These hotbeds of supernatural activity are only exacerbated by the presence of antique artifacts that serve as Sources. Several famous castles also hold political power, and the Neo-Samurai (page 177) have recently taken possession of the Imperial Palace to increase their claim for legitimacy. Such revered castles can even serve as Sources for Mythoi of their own ancient legends, blurring the line between the past and the present.

Finally, the deserted parts of Tokyo can also be a home to those who seek secluded places to call their own. These subcultures could be political exiles, futurist entrepreneurs, genetic offshoots, religious extremists, or other outcasts, who build an enclave for themselves in the ruins. Some of these groups pool their resources to construct a building complex in the neglected urban wilds and make it into their own utopia. Others, lacking the money to build what they need, simply band together and take over a deserted neighborhood. This is particularly true out on the fringes of the Megacity, up in the mountains and valleys that serve as the exurban outlands. However they are made, these offshoot towns carefully exclude outsiders and even wall themselves off from the world around them. Some look like manicured spas, others like post-apocalyptic fortresses. All are hostile to outsiders.

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CORPS, CRIME, & CITY GOVERNMENT

Long ago the seat of the Japanese government moved to Edo (now called Tokyo) and the kami called Ō-Inari came to rest there. Ō-Inari, a spirit of abundance and success taking the appearance of a red fox, was an incredibly popular deity, worshiped at roughly a third of all shrines in Japan. From its hidden shrine within those original layers of Tokyo, Ō-Inari empowered the city to flourish into the Megacity that it is today.

However, with the coming of the Noise, the fox kami grew angry. Under the yoke of the information age, Tokyo's people were not joyous and playful, but rather jaded and over-informed. As Ō-Inari has grown more and more displeased, it has succumbed to spiritual corruption, becoming an ara-mitama (wild soul). The out-of-control kami has begun unleashing corruptive fox spirits known as kitsune (page 119) out into the Megacity's halls of power, to bring down Tokyo's social structure from within.

The resulting corruption takes many forms. Bribery is rampant, with bureaucrats beholden only to corporate overlords with the cash to make things happen. Those in power abuse their positions, coordinating only to enact overzealous monitoring of Tokyo's citizens through surveillance drones and cyberspace taps. The Megacity expands and seizes control over its surrounding prefectures, fuelled by a tainted version of Ō-Inari's blessings of abundance, grasping at authority with no ability to govern well. The people of these annexed zones see their infrastructure crumble and their leaders succumb to the lure of power. The result has been an erosion of trust in public institutions, giving rise to local community leaders, big corporations, and organized crime to fill in the void.

With each new disaster bungled by leaders manipulated by supernatural forces, the insidiously sly fox god comes closer to ripping Tokyo apart between its spiritual teeth in its animalistic desire to rid the world of the Noise. Ironically, Ō-Inari only makes the Noise worse with its repressive government, but the fox is willing to sacrifice this generation for a future it sees far in the distance.

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THE EMERGENCY TASK FORCE

In the wake of the Nanotech Disaster the Tokyo government was forced to step up and begin overseeing Japan's everyday governance on a national level.

They did so with the use of emergency protocols, granting them the right to, among other things, incorporate local governing bodies into their own, and allocating budget towards the creation of a paramilitary task force out of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department.

The **Nanoteku kinkyū tokubetsu ninmu butai** (Nanotech Emergency Special Task Force), or **Nano-butai** (Nano troops), has become a *de facto* army. They are very well funded, AR-trained, cyber-augmented, and equipped with some of the best military-spec gear around, all thanks to the investment of many megacorps. The megacorps have a lot of say in the use of the Nano-butai, as the entire task force is thoroughly corrupted by Ō-Inari's kitsune. If enough corps join forces, they could theoretically send the Nano-butai to destroy their rivals, but the fractious nature of the relationships between the controlling corps means that such an arrangement is incredibly unlikely.

At its core, the Nano-butai is still about containing outbreaks of nanotech and biotech hazards, and its units can occasionally be encountered when they're flying above in their special cargo helicopters or walking around in their light-reflecting hazard suits and hard hats. The citizens of Tokyo see the Nano-butai in action whenever its directive is flagged in their area, which happens several times a year – almost always as a false alarm created by a yōkai, which the Nano-butai tries to address with their ineffective science specialists or brutal firepower. Eventually, an onmyōji shows up to fix things up.

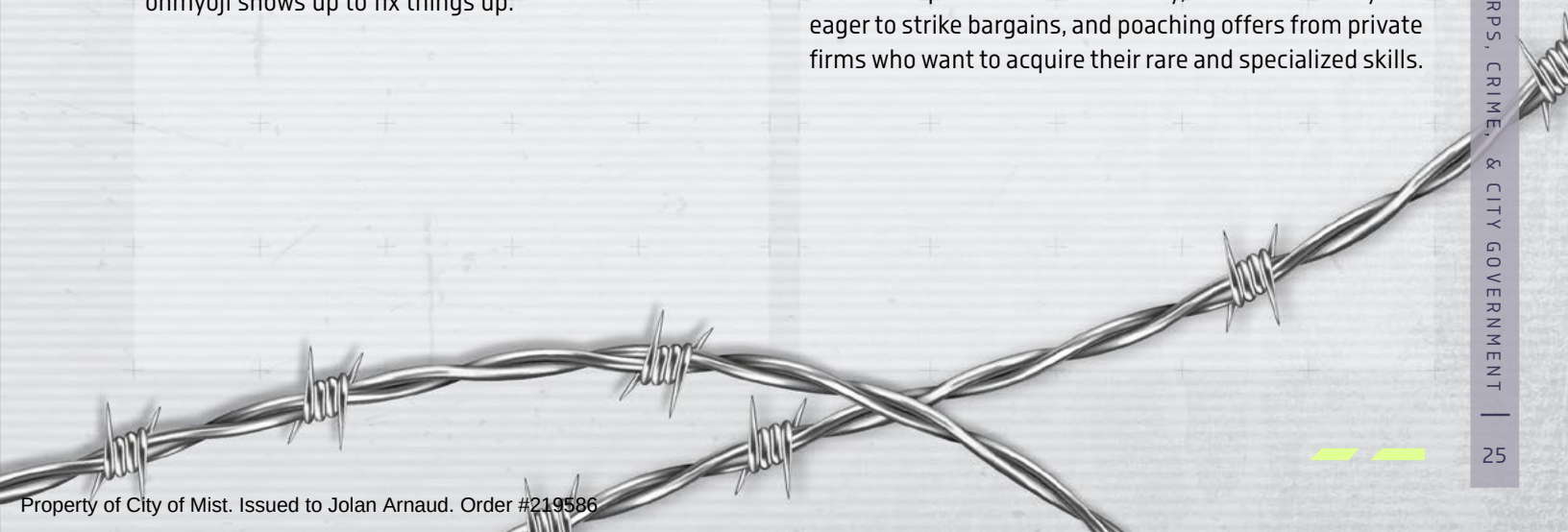
ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE

Each prefecture maintains its own local police force, and many hire corporations to provide security forces and handle law enforcement.

As a result, a person who gets to travel a lot around the Megacity will meet many different types of cops, from the lazy unaugmented beat cop, to the special forces riding augmented horses on street patrol, to the taser-armed android officer. Friendly AR bots and surveillance drones are available to remind you when you're about to break some local rule.

There are two quiet government agencies that operate in the shadows. The first is the **Security Bureau**, handling counterterrorism and cybercrimes. The Security Bureau sniffs out "suspicious activity" like procurement of weaponry, smuggled goods, trafficked persons, or synthetic intelligences. Under the emergency protocols, it also tracks vocal political dissent, disloyalty to the state, unusual spending habits, irregular GPS data from personal electronics, and participation in online communities placed on certain watchlists. While it rarely acts on these later cases, nothing prevents it from doing so, a fact the Security Bureau is happy to remind the corps and crime families on occasion. Leave the bribe in the regular cyberspace box, and next time, be more subtle.

All matters of the supernatural are the purview of the **Bureau of Onmyō** (page 151). The Bureau has blackmailed and manipulated its way back into official sponsorship, but it does so out of necessity – the government refuses to grant it a suitable budget, which it desperately needs. Every day is a struggle, as the Bureau of Onmyō suffers a critical lack of three vital assets: funding, respect, and genuine allies in either the government or the corps. Meanwhile, its overworked and underpaid inspectors are flooded with attempts at mundane bribery, entreaties from yōkai eager to strike bargains, and poaching offers from private firms who want to acquire their rare and specialized skills.



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THE ZAIBATSU CORPORATIONS

Grinding the soul of the Megacity into dust is an interconnected array of corporations known as the zaibatsu.

Each zaibatsu is a megacorporate conglomerate consisting of several smaller corps of various fields, bound together through a byzantine web of financing and invisible ownership. This ball of strings is nearly impossible to untangle, making sure outside forces – from rival corps to inflation – can't effectively harm any of a zaibatsu's component parts.

Each zaibatsu is a natural competitor to all of the others. In the Tokyo merc world, it is not uncommon for a crew to be hired by one company to attack a completely different company, from a different field, even if each belongs to a different zaibatsu. Violence is sometimes inner-facing as well – the nuances of corporate finance tilt diplomatic relations within zaibatsu such that each company has a great deal of incentive to outperform their "partners" in quarterly profits. Crews are just as likely to be sent on sabotage or espionage missions between enemies as they are between seemingly allies.

Tokyo's politicians give significant benefits to any zaibatsu that walks the party line dutifully. The corruption is so inherent, in a way, the system can be considered elegant: new politicians are trained to work with a certain zaibatsu, and when their mentors retire, they take over patronizing that zaibatsu with government wealth while their mentor takes up a cushy "consulting" job with that very zaibatsu. In time, the successor will pick out their own trainee to perpetuate the cycle before retiring to the very same zaibatsu. Everyone wins, except the people of Tokyo.

Most of these corporate collectives have been invaded by one kami or another, often due to their own foolish medling. Corps seek out Sources to give them the power of the Mythoi without knowing the full implications of bringing such powerful spirits into their midst. More and more, the executives and board members of zaibatsu are becoming the pawns of powers beyond their understanding, who guide them into corporate wars, foolish ventures, and deadly outcomes.

HOUSEHOLD NAMES

The most prominent and powerful megacorporations in Tokyo are invariably leaders of their zaibatsu, and have close ties to the corrupt central government.

Ishii-Harada is the biggest purveyor of consumer-grade cyberspace electronics and AR interfaces, and for the last few years it has been fighting hard against several competitors to become the exclusive provider of military-grade hacking devices to the Security Bureau and the Nano-butai. Ōshima Shipping and **Senju Freight** similarly battle for dominance in high-volume oceanic trade, with one or both invested heavily in half of the Megacity's ports. They also fund a joint venture – bitterly – to secure the waves against pirates.

Taiyo-SolarTech (page 201) receives obvious favoritism for its role in powering the Megacity grid, with the government turning a blind eye to the doings of its Sundog assault squads. **Kojima Security Tech**, a robotics and artificial intelligence corp with connections to several of Tokyo's most powerful town mayors, dominates production of aerial and anthroform security drones while making respectable showings in the fields of home security drones and market forecast AI.

Other corps are powerful *despite* butting heads with Tokyo. **Shinogi Security**, well-known Yakuza ties and all (page 222), has plenty of contracts for protecting sensitive sites. **Sōma Medical Corporation** (page 192) has been audited more times in the past five years than the top three zaibatsu operating in the Megacity combined, and investigated by the Bureau of Onmyō on multiple occasions, and yet its activities proceed as smoothly as ever. And everyone in the merc world knows armor and arms manufacturer **Shōrai** seems to have something on the Tokyo government, since no one dares touch it.

Global giants such as NM3 and KOCMOC have a huge influence over the Japanese market, but usually through local corps acting as fronts. Epis International picked Tokyo as its center for biological development by acquiring two big subsidiaries: **Suburashī Very!** provides cosmetics and engineered pets, while **Chrysanthemum Biosciences** is a world leader in business-facing genetic engineering. The latter was previously owned by **Deung**, a company that made great profits in the wake of the Nanotech Disaster, thanks to its wide selection of hazardous material solutions.

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THE YAKUZA & ONI GANGS

Organized crime in Japan is almost exclusively the purview of the **Yakuza**. The Yakuza are made of affiliated tribes with long legacies and ancient grudges.

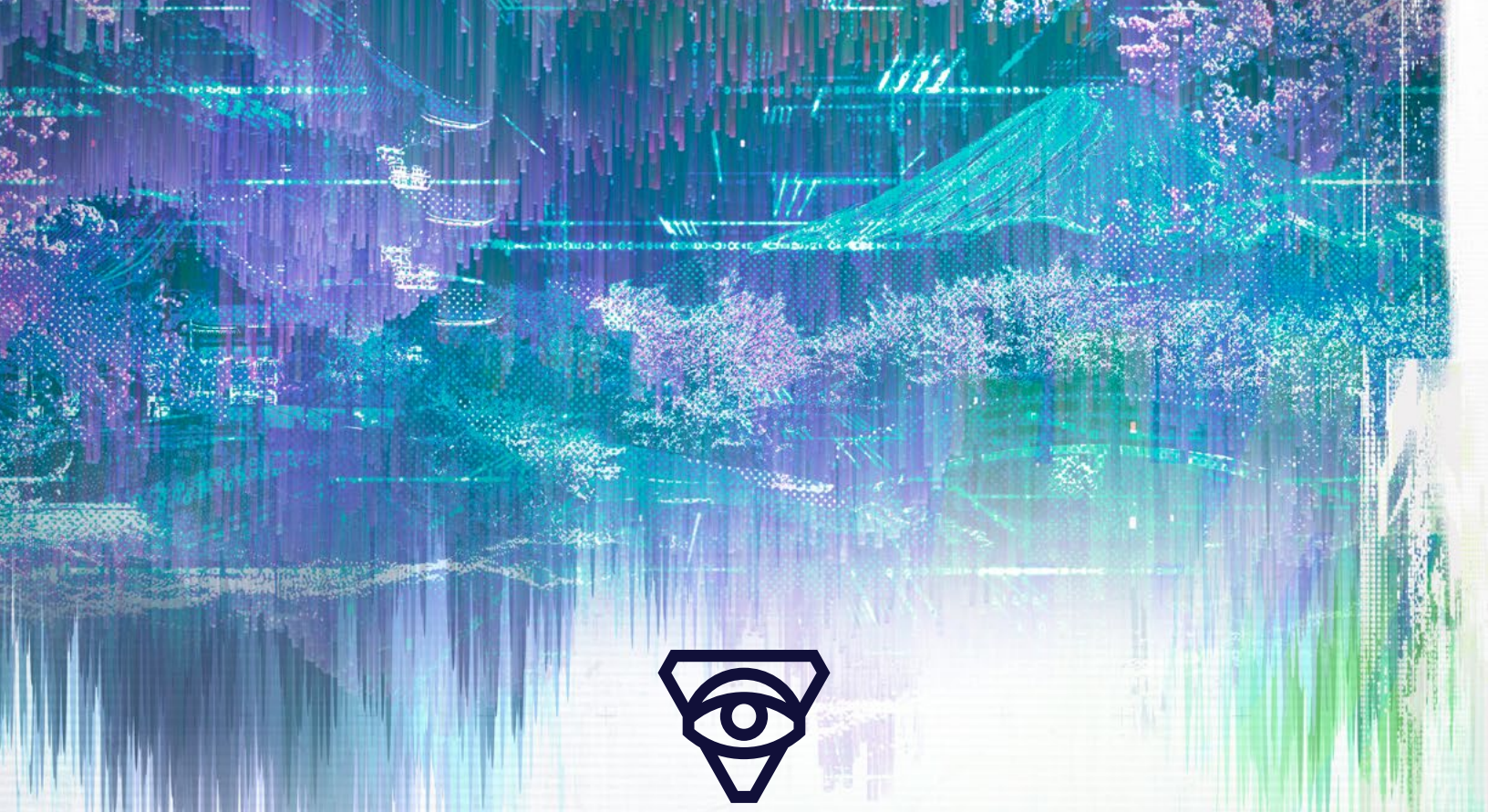
Currently, the **Iribe-gumi** and the **Maikubi-kai** (page 220) are engaged in a war on the Megacity's streets. While the police are unable to take an official stance on the fight, it's common knowledge that the government favors the Iribe-gumi, and employ their front, the legitimate Shinogi Security corporation. The government uses Shinogi to outsource dirty work to its assassins and cleaners, through the very police officers or chiefs who take bribes from them.

While the Yakuza are considered honorable by some citizens, even charitable, the Megacity's street gangs are treated as little more than scum. Trading in drugs, counterculture memes, disruptive tech, and good old violence, most of these gangs are local problems, confined to local prefectures, and the greater Megacity ignores them completely. Only true menaces, like the **Oni Biker Gangs** (page 185), have the resources and Sources to become a lasting threat, causing serious damage and surviving crackdowns by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and the Bureau of Onmyō.

Around Japan, the uninhabited islands of the Pacific are filled with sophisticated piracy operations. Any pirate group without the means to hide its assets from satellite imagery and jam their targets during attacks has long since been destroyed, leaving only the strongest, smartest, and wealthiest organizations, recruiting the most cunning and ambitious pirates. The Bureau of Onmyō has reason to suspect some are being aided by sea monsters. Corps would frequently hire raiders to sabotage and disrupt their rivals, but many pirates despise the untrustworthy elite, instead focusing on lucrative smuggling operations of foreign drugs, weapons, black market harnesses, and secondhand military cybernetics.



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PEOPLE OF TOKYO 20XX

BOX DEALER

The middle class buy their electronics from authorized multi-chain stores, but in the slums, cheap electronics are purchased in one of countless markets on the local "electronics street". It's such a common practice, that even in higher-end neighborhoods some market stalls might go up at night, after the more legitimate businesses close up shop. Electronics components purchased in this way are often mass produced knock offs of the more advanced tamatebako or appliances, no guarantees. When the stalls do carry top tier parts, they are usually stolen goods. Box dealers, named so because they are often covered in tamatebako boxes strung together by black data cables, have become well known for their opportunistic flair, ready to haggle on every credit, giving you their utmost attention while somehow being aware of every other potential customer around.

BŌSŌZOKU

Every neighborhood gang has some bōsōzoku, a kind of motorcycle riding greaser. Though they are often the street level representatives of much more dangerous organized crime groups (such as the Yakuza), some fit into their environment as accepted members of the community, just a natural part of the scenery. This is not to say that bōsōzoku are friendly. Most define themselves by a total commitment to outlandishness in their dress and behavior. Despite being unpredictable to a fault, they can be a useful local connection to the larger underworld.

COFFIN WORKER

Cyberspace is for many the primary place of work. Online laborers are commonly exploited to such a degree that their hours of work can take up almost all of their waking time. With their attention already turned away from their physical location and needs, these workers are quick to eschew most material goods, living entirely within horizontal capsule apartments often referred to as "coffins".

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There they subsist mostly on generic food paste and have little time (or space) to exercise, instead purchasing various stimulants to try and keep their bodies functioning. When they do emerge from their tiny homes, they are emaciated and weak, seemingly confused by the material world and the limitations of their physical bodies, with some developing traumas born of digital dependencies. The "confused coffin worker" has become a common sitcom trope.

CORPORATE WARLORD

Though the days of shogun, daimyo, and samurai are long gone, there are those who see themselves as modern feudal lords. Behind every aggressive corporate act in their unending skirmish over resources is a belligerent or ambitious executive. Some fashion themselves as true warlords and expend their quarterly bonuses on samurai armor or combat cyberware. Others furiously study books on Bushido, sword fighting tactics, and military strategy, to become the ultimate generals they feel they must be. Most don't see action, as they are not much more than micromanaging finance geeks, but a nightclub encounter with a haughty, self-important corp exec could become violent once she detaches a hidden katana from her spinal implant, eager for a chance to test herself, is not impossible or unknown.

DOMESTIC ROBOT

The Japanese embraced robots a long time ago, and even androids, who are shunned by many worldwide for their resemblance to humans, are welcome in the Megacity. Robotic assistants are seen as obvious and natural extensions of information technology and mechanical engineering, a part of society. For the upper class, domestic robots are a necessity, as they combine programmable performance with an assumption of discretion – which is wholly incorrect. Many elites find themselves compromised and blackmailed by those who get their hands on recordings made through the electronic eyes of these servants. The lower class also engages with robots trained to do simple jobs, as many service industry positions are now filled by androids and anthroform drones, rarely more than a sophisticated (and hackable) mind in a plastic body. Fully automated smart houses are also common among upper-middle class, utilizing a host of small drones under a single AI. It's surprisingly common for this AI to have the personality of a "waifu" or "husbando", a surrogate spouse complete with relationship programming, even in married households; some use the AI to offload emotional responsibilities, growing detached from their less and less significant other, but other couples accept the AI into a new kind of familial dynamic.

IDOL WORSHIPER

In Tokyo, being a master entertainer is not enough. To truly compete on the Megacity stage, a person must be a singer-dancer-musician-model-actor hybrid: an idol. They are the total package and they inspire absolute fealty and obsession from their fans, who come from all parts of society. Most idols are rarely seen beyond their VR performances, constantly guarded by entire teams of corporate security forces or simply because they only exist in VR, written by talented avatar designers who are nothing like them. Their fans, however, are everywhere, sporting branded merch and performing their trademarked dance moves with precision, all day, every day. At any given idol event, mobs of their worshiping fans gather online and strain a Domain's capacity. In a physical event, the mobs overflow the streets and threaten the peace. The most fanatic of fans attach their emotional lives to those of the idol. A single rumor about the idol's love life, if it goes public before PR manages to control the narrative, can halt production on entire product lines or cause chaos in the streets.

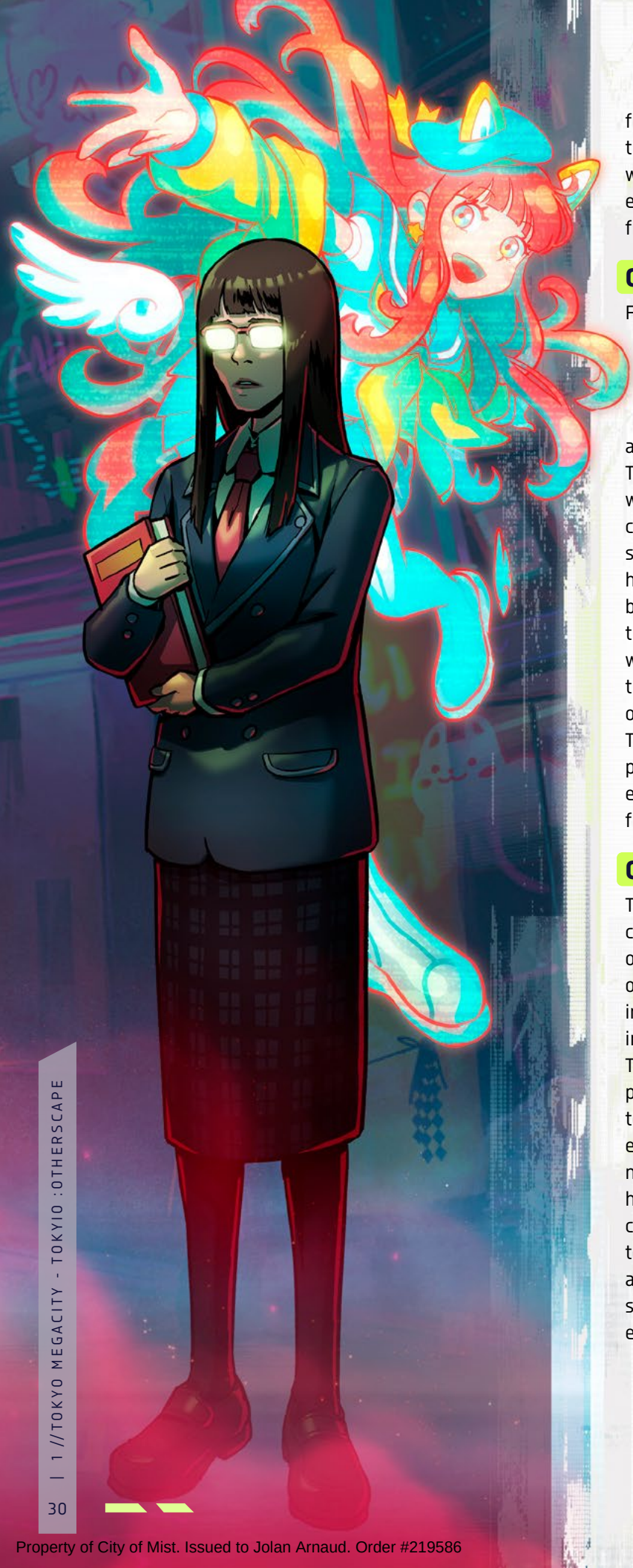
MASCOT ROBOT

Most train station towns in Tokyo have their own mascot, usually taking the form of a saccharine life-sized cartoon character of some kind. These big-eyed caricatures are often associated with a local industry or known kami traditionally associated with the area. Though these mascots were originally embodied as plump costumes worn by humans, these days most are entirely robotic or VR constructs. These community directed robots have become akin to civil servants in many places, accepting complaints and presenting guidance. Recently they have begun to merge with the spirits they are meant to express, at times becoming entirely inhabited by the resident kami as though they were shrines or temples. Despite having been carefully programmed, such kami-inhabited robots are now monitored by their municipal creators as they tend to have strange outbursts or even displays of magical power.

NEIGHBORHOOD MYSTIC

Small shrines and temples dot the cityscape of Tokyo, allowing residents to casually and reverently interact with the kami on a recurring basis throughout their day. Some see this as an old and useless tradition, others do it out of ritualistic habit, but a rare few take the kami seriously, maintaining their sacred spaces and serving as keepers of spiritual wisdom. Every neighborhood seems to have a wise man or woman whom the community turns to when matters involving the kami arise. Not exactly religious

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figures, these locals – who can be of any age – are simply those who accept the magic through the Noise and interact with the Mythoi. Some even have powers, owing to their exposure to mythic Sources on a regular basis, or as a gift from a thankful kami.

ONLINE OTAKU

For some, being immersed in culture is more than just a creed, it's the proper way to live. Japanese otaku are people so obsessed with some major aspect of popular or nerd culture that they have forsaken the physical world, happy to immerse themselves in a life that is always online – that's where their culture exists, after all. The most otaku of otaku fully engage with their online worlds, roleplaying constantly in virtual realities and games constructed by the media corporations. Many house themselves in pod apartments, just as the coffin workers do; however, in comparison to coffin workers, they treat their bodies well. "Meat maintenance" is a popular topic among them, and as many are independently wealthy, there are whole markets aimed at them, with devices and additives that the coffin workers only have on their wishlists. Some otaku are AR-junkies, who bring the virtual into the physical. They modify their bodies to become their heroes through plastic sculpting and cybernetics, add holographic special effects, and configure their AR to present them with a world fitting of their hero – living their life 24/7.

OVERWORKED OFFICE WORKER

The typical office worker, or "salaryman" as they are often called, must commute to work in a corporate headquarters or annex building at the whim of their middle-management overlords. Though most of their daily duties could be done in cyberspace, Tokyo managers require meatspace meetings as yet another proof of loyalty from their servants. The office is therefore a place to prove one's worth as a person. These drone-like workers all dress alike, in order to keep from standing out from the crowd, and most are either completely sleep deprived or still hungover from last night. Being prevented from achieving a state of rested healthiness is a feature of the system, not a bug – the corp masters would rather have obedience over an ability to innovate or address challenges. Outside of work, they are either on their bikes, standing in a train, or buying something from a vending machine, almost always dreary eyed and browsing between entertainment streams.

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DISTRICTS OF TOKYO 20XX

FIVE RINGS MILITARY ZONES

Military Base

The Five Rings Paramilitary Company is an international armed force to be reckoned with, despite having relatively limited (they would say, "selective") manpower. Their fortress-districts, fencing off entire neighborhoods, stand at the edge of the Megacity, strategically placed near major ports since many of their missions take place abroad. The fortresses are equal parts awe-inspiring and terrifying, with ornate filigree and images of valiant soldiers carved on their impregnable walls. Troops and their families are housed in blocky residential apartment complexes, which serve as both barracks and family homes. This increases unit cohesion as does the fact that members of a unit are assigned to a specific apartment complex. Their most famous zone is the Inazumachō Detention Sector, a whole town that was converted into the ultimate for-profit prison, where lawbreakers and innocents who've made enemies of the megacorps are incarcerated. Flocks of Uguisu (bush warbler) drones patrol this district, communicating with each other using an unhackable network of high-pitched tones, much like their namesake bird.

ASSEMBLY LINES

Run by Machines

Dedicated to the production of consumer goods, an Assembly Line is more of a giant machine than a district. Rows of factories manufacture countless varieties of parts, circuitry, and devices. The majority of the process is automated, and the district is mostly populated with machines – androids, cargo drones, maintenance crawlers, and others. The Nearspace environment feels strangely alien, with countless artificial minds speaking among themselves. The few apartments here are owned by corporations, with the residents being engineers who like as little human interaction as possible, or managers who were banished here from a more comfortable position for some transgression. Those hiding from the law gather in the district's abandoned warehouses, whether for shady criminal dealings, anti-corporate punk concerts, or meetings of android revolutionaries with corporate-indentured human co-conspirators.

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HOKKYOKUSEI GATED COMMUNITIES

A Carefully Cultivated Environment

Every wage slave and merc dreams of owning a manor in a Hokkyokusei Gated Community, gated villages promising a life of comfort, a far cry from the Megacity's filthy streets. An android security force ensures that the rabble of Tokyo will never see a glimpse of the majesty behind the walls, and a small army of maintenance drones keep the utilities in working order. These opulent districts, which have been popping up across the Megacity, are designed by genius architect **Katsushika Hanako**. She creates the gleaming palaces for Tokyo's elite, each a masterpiece blending traditional Japanese architecture with a sleek modern style. Hanako claims her father's spirit inspires her to create the designs; the Source-user community still hasn't verified if this is indeed the case. The four largest Hokkyokusei communities are designed after the seasons, complete with biodomes of serene gardens, parks, and zoos. The Bureau of Onmyō is specifically forbidden from reviewing these places, which makes it very suspicious.

HŌSEKI ROW

A Night of Bizzare Pleasures

When the sun sets in Tokyo, Hōseki Row awakens. There's only one "real" Hōseki Row, but its dozens of imitators are doing such a good job that probably only history buffs care about the original. The ultimate nightlife center, it is filled with hostess clubs, izakaya (page 36), karaoke bars, love hotels, and pachinko parlors (page 37). The AR overlays can be blinding, but if one feels lost, any of the countless shapely androids greeters would be happy to escort you into the nearest attraction. Legal and illegal drugs are commonplace, and it doesn't take much effort to find a supplier for stolen uploaded memories of famous idols or time-limited access keys to pleasure cyberspace Domains. Yakuza clans rule the district, maintaining an uneasy truce with the corps, whose offices are usually just on the other side of the street.



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MT. HŌRAI MEDIA CENTER

Super Hype!

Mt. Hōrai is a pop culture paradise, both in meatspace and in cyberspace. A vast complex of streets and towering buildings, its levels are crowded with arcades, electronic stores, merchandise shops, character cafes, and the tens of thousands of visitors that squat in them. Holographic advertisements cover towering skyscrapers, displaying the latest anime, amusement cyberworlds, virtual celebrities, and AR full of attention-grabbing memes. This is *the* place to go for tourists visiting from abroad, and it features life-size imitations of various Japanese landmarks so that no visitor will have a reason to go anywhere else. On its many platforms idols perform their virtual concerts while Noh theaters cater to the more sophisticated; in cyberspace, it's a central hub for wacky game shows and sponsored reality streams.

OLD TOKYO

Rediscovered Grace

As Tokyo annexed and sprawled westward across the island, its centers of government and business moved to reside in a number of different sectors. What was once Tokyo's bustling center has become a dilapidated clutch of neighborhoods largely abandoned by the powers that be, though it still holds great interest to certain groups who know what secrets remain within the lawless slum. Chief among these are the Neo-Samurai, who have seized the Kōkyo, the old Imperial Palace, as their new headquarters in order to bolster their credibility and standing. The corps and the Neo-Samurai battle daily within the once busy streets of Old Tokyo, searching for relics and spiritual centers of the past to harvest their Sources, hoping to find an edge against one another in the growing mystical arms race.

RYŌGEN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Worker Assembly Line

Tokyo's most prestigious technical schools and high tech factories have migrated and merged over the last few decades to become a sprawling interconnected higher education district that streamlines the journey from training to tech worker. Because so much of the education experience is conducted in cyberspace, the physical space is primarily dedicated to dormitories, VR lounges, Harnessing stations, offices, workshops, and design complexes. Students can be found congregating in the voluminous cafeterias on campus, or in its beautiful gardens. Strangely, the campus has over the years formed into the shape of a zen rock garden pattern, mystically charging the zone with a surreal, almost creepy calm. It's unclear if anyone is responsible, but the effects can be felt by outsiders, who are often shocked by the placid, mindless demeanors of the young residents here. With a curriculum decided by a megacorp-lobbied committee, and teachers recruited from those same megacorps, Ryōgen is built around job applicability. This is not a university experience of free thought and open minds, but an assembly line where workers are made.

TENRYŪ-JŌ ISLE

Old-fashioned and Obtuse

If it could be said there's a single seat of power for the Megacity's government, it's Tenryū-jō Isle. This gigantic administrative district is built on a reclaimed island in Biwa Lake near the geographical center of Tokyo, some distance from most cultural and commercial centers. There's an "old world" atmosphere on Tenryū-jō, and even the many corporate bigwigs who frequently visit to make deals with the countless bureaucrats take care to dress appropriately. It is an open secret among those in the know that many kami have taken residence here, masquerading as bureaucrats, or haunting the Relics that clutter the place as museum displays or objects of tradition. This is much to the chagrin of the Bureau of Onmyō, which maintains a presence here in a traditionally-designed building, but is generally not allowed to interfere in the business of big government.

KAMI ISLANDS

Place of Power

Scattered throughout Tokyo are dozens of Thin Places that serve as gateways into magical shima (islands) entirely ruled over by the kami. Some of these mystical islands show up in Japanese mythology as paradises or places where the rules of reality are strange. Each is associated with a particular kind of kami and most are ruled over by a single powerful spirit. Such island courts could be heavenly planes, earthly mountaintops, watery ponds, or hellish shadow realms; some shima even exist within cyberspace and are inhabited by the kami spirits of digital concepts and memes. Some kami come and go from these islands on a regular basis, and tend to consider their shima as a private retreat for their kind, but humans can cross over as well. Gateways into these spiritual realms often look like mundane doorways or arches, though some are carefully crafted torii gates which must be activated through prayer to open.

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MEIDO

Ravaged Ruins

Taking the name of the lands of the dead, the Meido ("dark land") is not a single region, but a general name for all the valleys that form the southwestern outskirts of the Tokyo Megacity. Here the mountains tower over abandoned outlands, landfills of trash, and dozens of isolated communities, from scavenger enclaves to scientific research centers. In the wake of the Nanotech Disaster, only the desperate, ignorant, or foolhardy call these valleys home. Several yōkai have merged with the industrial and urban waste, becoming monstrous beings, such as the Yakubyō Gami, a collection of pestilence spirits that have strangely become this land's version of lawbringers. Groups of their devoted cultists, the **Roamers** (page 236), travel the Meido and seek out those who have trespassed against the laws of both society and the kami , inflicting them with diseases if the Yakubyō Gami judge them to be deserving of punishment.

YAKUSHI MEDICAL CORRIDOR

Bio-war

Originally constructed by the Yakushi Medical Conglomerate, the Yakushi Medical Corridor cuts a path across the Megacity. Built around a major urban hospital complex, the corridor contains dozens of interconnected facilities, each specializing in different kinds of care or research. The quick access to shared medical resources and minds has lured most of the advanced biological and pharmaceutical labs in the Megacity to converge here, including even bitter rivals. As such, this region, while dedicated to health, has also become a deadly corporate warzone. With access to the most advanced medtech in the Megacity, face-changer bioaugs and multi-jointed infiltrators see common use, while straightforward violence is also astonishingly common, since life is cheap: soldiers wounded in the fighting are often quickly revived, with new cybernetic parts to show for their courage. Thus the warfare never ends, as warriors are recycled and put back out on the streets for more fighting and testing of experimental biotech mods and resurrection procedures.

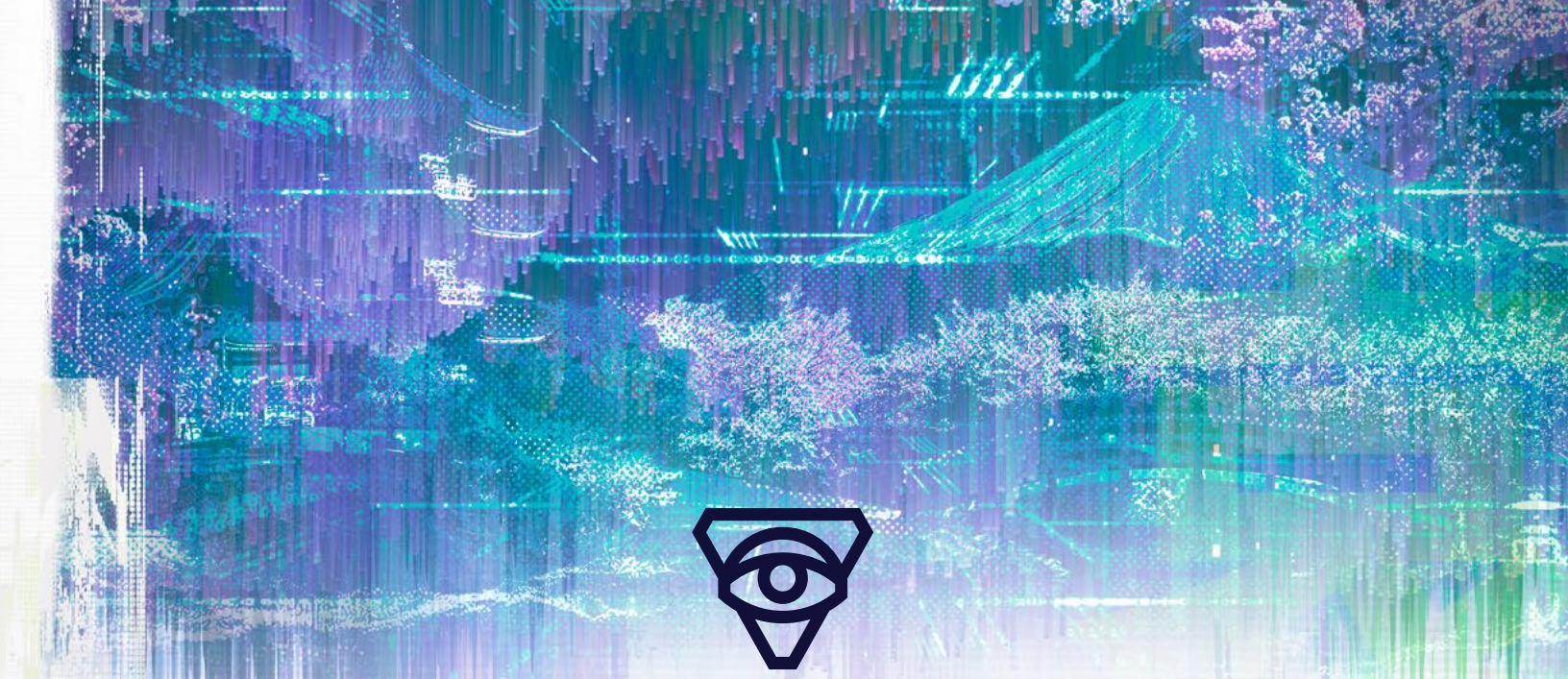
ZAIBATSU BLOCK

Conform, or Else

Dozens of skyscrapers pierce the sky of a Zaibatsu Block, a megacorporate center where a hundred companies share office blocks, company headquarters, and conference centers. Most, but not all commercial entities in a Block belong to the same zaibatsu, and while to the untrained (and Noise-filled) mind all Blocks look the same, a more attentive onlooker could see that *this* fast food chain is more prominent here and not there, and *this* town uses only WhiteWhite maintenance drones while *that* one uses only AntiBacs. Most workers in Tokyo are loyal employees of their corps, but even among those who aren't, most become loyal to their Zaibatsu Blocks without even realizing it, developing a preference for specific logos. An army of workers spend their days in these offices, then go seek respite in ramen shops or izakaya (page 36) with their coworkers. Those with families return to the suburbs, while bachelors live in village-sized apartment buildings, with rooms that barely fit a single person.



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TOKYO 20XX SCENE LOCATIONS

BIKE PARKADE

Multistory automobile parking complexes are a staple of cyberpunk, but they're less common in Tokyo due to the Megacity's penchant for bikes and trains. Instead, massive train-station adjacent bike parkades serve a similar purpose as a place to park and as a semi-enclosed shady spot to hold showdowns and handoffs. Automation is rife and there's a cam in every corner and a vending machine next to every thick column, but security is a joke and easily hacked. When a fight goes down, the bikes are often the first victims, scraped across concrete and melting under the heat of magical effects, leaving the parkade's friendly AR mascot, who was supposed to help you find your parking space, quite confused.

CANAL WATERWAY

Tokyo was once a city in harmony with nature, built as a nexus of rivers, relying on its waterways for trade and transport. Over the centuries the city destroyed this balance, polluting and paving over its rivers and streams. Still, the water had to go somewhere and so as the Megacity expanded from coast to coast it shunted rivers into straight canals. These industrial-looking waterways were neglected as well, becoming cesspools of filth and disease which occasionally overflow and flood their surroundings. Criminal groups know that operating in and on the canals makes them essentially invisible to the rest of the Megacity, which pretends that the old rivers no longer exist.

The canals suffer from spiritual pollution as well. The old rivers once served as important reservoirs for magical energy, and the unclean nature of the newer waterways, as well as the population's disregard for them, pollutes the energy in the districts through which they flow. The Bureau of Onmyō is trying to appeal through proper channels to rectify the shape of the canals, since this taint affects the dragons who live there and creates new yōkai threats, but no progress is being made.

24 HOUR CORPORATE OFFICE

With zaibatsu companies engaging in the kind of espionage that was once only the purview of nations, the corporate home office serves as a tempting target for mercs – but "after hours" is a thing of the past. In the Tokyo Megacity, the most dedicated salarymen are encouraged to stay for

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entire midnight shifts. At every hour of the day, a considerable number of obsessed and loyal workers, often hyped up on caffeine and brainwave inducers, can be found lurking or huddled at their desks in the open plan offices. On occasion, a poor soul will literally work themselves to death, a common-enough phenomenon that it has a name, karoshi ("overwork death"). This is to the mercs' advantage, however, as the discovery of the body of a worker in their booth might not bring about the amount of attention one would think it should.

CROWDED TRAIN STATION

Tokyo is a network of towns, each centered on a train station. Where other Megacities rely on a complicated system of motorways, Tokyo's lifeblood is a system of complicated train routes. With many organizations mandating late night work hours or early morning shifts, commuters are a common sight at all hours, and the stations are always busy. Some workers sleep at the stations, in the adjacent capsule motels.

The trains are managed by several complex AI systems, which supposedly follow the schedules to the second, but maintenance failures are not uncommon – unless you're taking a luxury bullet train. On the regular lines, the millions of commuters are packed like sardines, each only paying attention to their own AR interface. Some criminal elements, particularly teenage gang members, essentially live on the trains themselves with certain routes gaining a reputation for quick drug trade, easy smuggling, or as places to acquire basic hacking services. The train stations themselves have little use for professional mercs, as the surveillance level tends to be high, but they're an excellent place to lose a pursuer.

IZAKAYA

The izakaya (sake clubs) are alcohol bars where afterwork revelry takes place. This institution has existed for as long as Japan has been a nation, and the clubs are sometimes called akachōchin ("red lanterns") for the paper lanterns that traditionally adorn them. Corporate white collar workers are expected to go out to these clubs once their shift is over, to drink, socialize, and sing karaoke with their fellow floormates. This drinking tradition is called "nomikai", and the social pressure to participate has the effect of completely depriving many office workers of a home life unless they are willing to sacrifice their employment futures by neglecting these *de-facto* extra work hours, and so these places are usually surrounded by service providers catering to lonely, drunk wage slaves.

KŌBAN

Kōban ("police box") are small isolated police outposts, about the size of a convenience store. Most Tokyo prefectures can't allocate many resources to fighting crime in each and every neighborhood, so they resort to placing these tiny stations along main junctions, each fielding about a dozen cops. Kōban-assigned police officers are often only given access to bicycles and camera drones to aid them in law enforcement, and more often than not, their familiarity with the goings on in the surrounding streets is limited by how unwelcoming they tend to be towards the police. Kōban are often the target of intense gang graffiti campaigns and constant pranking. Still, if a local wanted to talk to the police in person, this is where they would go.

KONBINI

Around most corners in the Megacity there's a small convenience store. These konbini, though often run by some international corporation and sporting the same logos you would see worldwide, serve a fundamental purpose in the life of Tokyo's residents. Not only are their shelves stuffed with plastic-wrapped snacks and drinks, but also with other life necessities such as bento box meals and hygiene products, plus they provide basic services such as email stations and VR headset loans. Most offer an array of bureaucratic services too, so you can pay your fines and send your snail mail from the same counter. A well-stocked konbini, with a proper staff, can serve as a powerful center of neighborhood life.

MATSURI

A matsuri ("festival" or "holiday") is a kind of a Japanese festival, usually to celebrate a local spirit or spiritual event. Each shrine has its own festival, usually in the summer, during which the mikoshi (a portable shrine) is paraded around the neighborhood along with dancing, festivities, and merchant and food stands. In much of the Megacity, the original meaning of the festivals is lost, as many shrines have fallen out of use or their teachings have been oversimplified through the Noise. At such matsuri events, aesthetics take the stage: people show up to show off their outlandish Decora fashion – a vivid, over-the-top style of complicated cosplay, or excessive cybernetics such as chromed skin. A staple of matsuri is fireworks, both in the air and AR, as well as celebrating the town's local cuisine. Kami find these festivities irresistible, not only joining in, but easily blending in, trying out the foods, posing as "weird mascots" in selfies for the festival goers, and in the process seeming to eat up all of this attention. Some festivals have

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unique features such as big floats dragged by carriages, ice sculpture contests, and even huge penises carried through the streets in one particular fertility festival.

NOODLE SHOP

Ramen shops are a common sight on Tokyo's streets, usually as either tiny indoor restaurants or sit-down street carts. Everyone has their favorite, the place that makes the noodles *just right,* or where the chef lets them have an extra gyōza. These little eateries are a staple of life in the Megacity, particularly in the impoverished neighborhoods, which are shunned by the big food chains. Sitting side by side and slurping noodles is an easy way to avoid catching the eye of a fellow diner, allowing tense conversations to benefit from the noodle shop's casual atmosphere. When a customer does look another dead in the eye, everyone knows that something serious is about to happen and such places have long been used for meetings between rivals, or to settle grudges.

PACHINKO PARLOR

Pachinko is a Japanese pastime played as a means of gambling. It involves placing steel balls into a device that looks like a cross between a pinball machine and a slot machine, with payouts being more of the metal balls (which can be redeemed for currency). Pachinko parlors have been operating in a legal gray area for many years, as gambling for money is illegal in Japan. The Yakuza and others are able to provide other gambling options, but they gear mostly toward the rich. The common people love their pachinko.

Pachinko parlors are incredibly noisy and very chaotic, both in meatspace and AR, making it almost impossible to be eavesdropped upon. They are frequented by luck kami and yōkai that prey upon the misfortune of gamblers. Many of these yōkai were once gamblers themselves, now haunting the parlors that took their livelihoods from them.

RYŌKAN

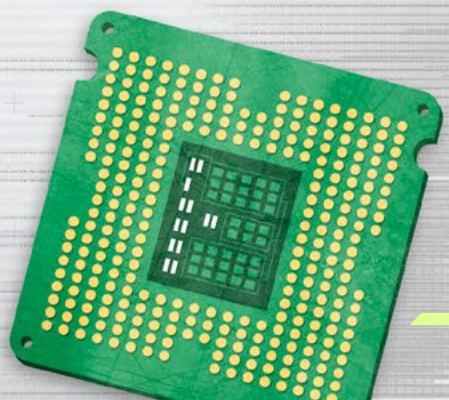
The ryōkan are traditionally-styled Japanese inns, harkening back to a much older age. Usually a staple of rural tourist areas, these hotels are becoming more prevalent in the Megacity proper, offering a luxury retreat for professionals who want to get out of town (but still remain in Tokyo) or act as a convention center. Most ryōkan hotels can offer a Japanese tea service, providing a formal meeting place surrounded by trappings of elegance. Another staple in ryōkan are *onsen*, hot spring bathing facilities, meant for calm relaxation in a natural environment. Modern ryōkan often lack access to hot springs, and therefore provide different spa services.

SENTŌ

The communal bath houses have returned to prominence in the Tokyo Megacity as a means of maintaining hygiene, socializing with one's peers, and enjoying a rare moment of relaxation. The modern sentō experience is blended with other forms of entertainment, such as bars, nightclubs, or brothels. Some are run by local gangs, giving themselves a hangout where visitors must come in visibly unarmed. Some sentō double as cyberspace parlors, complete with harnesses. This allows patrons the opportunity to float comfortably in the soothing warm water of the baths as they jack into the net. Hacking groups will sometimes even rent out a sentō for the night in order to gain exclusive access to the pools, believing the floating grants them an advantage.

SHŌTENGAI

Shōtengai are pedestrian-only streets dedicated to shops and shopping, closed to vehicle traffic and often covered to protect against rain, acidic or otherwise. In a sense they are like tiny suburban malls, with central management and security services. In some parts of the Megacity, shōtengai are central to the culture of the area, hosting festivals and parades. The first of these were built surrounding the roads leading to shrines, but while the streets remained, the temples have long since been demolished. These older shopping districts are still haunted by the spirits that once dwelled there, now causing no small amount of grief to residents who are not aware that the old kami resent the lack of reverence shown to them. They enjoy joining the festivals, though!



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GLOSSARY

Bōsōzoku (page 28). A motorcycle-riding greaser, sometimes a lackey of the Yakuza, other times their own boss, always with an outlandish style and an in-your-face attitude.

Buke. A merc crew recognized as such in the Tokyo underworld. See **Honor Among Mercs**, page 16.

Bureau of Onmyō (page 21). A government agency tasked with monitoring and enforcement over all things supernatural. Not entirely acknowledged by the rest of the Megacity government, the agency is understaffed and unable to stem the rising tide of yōkai. Onmyō operatives blend well with the Noise, as citizens don't think twice about government inspectors in uniform, even when that inspector is performing warding magic in front of them.

Bushi. A merc of some renown in the Tokyo underworld. See **Honor Among Mercs**, page 16.

Chimpira. A newcomer to the Tokyo underworld, who is yet to prove themselves. See **Honor Among Mercs**, page 16.

Coffin. A derogatory nickname given to a horizontal capsule bed equipped with cyberspace connection, nutrient intake, and waste outtake.

Hanko (page 230). A personal seal representing one's identity in an official manner, pressed onto devices to deliver an encrypted signature.

Idol. An all-round performer. Their personality and looks are commonly manufactured to attract as large a crowd as possible while encouraging devastating parasocial relationships.

Ishoku-Nano Paint (page 140). A body paint infused with preprogrammed microbes capable of altering the body or surface of the skin in useful ways. The paint can directly interface with the neural pathways of the body, allowing the decoration to effectively serve as temporary cybernetics. Despite the name, these paints are not powered by nanotech and so are legal in Tokyo.

Kami. A supernatural entity. Usually used to refer to the more benevolent ones.

Nano-butai. *Nanoteku kinkyū tokubetsu ninmu butai*, the Nanotech Emergency Special Task Force (page 25), created to handle the Nanotech Disaster (page 14) and still in use as a paramilitary force by the government.

Neo-Samurai (page 177). A cultural and activist movement led by disaffected corporate techies, this warrior-nerd collective seeks to defend its communities against yōkai monsters and gang violence. Dressed in 3D-printed samurai armor, members hone their skills in VR and establish enclaves in deserted neighborhoods.

Ofuda. A magical talisman commonly made of paper, capable of affecting kami in various ways. Mostly produced and used by the Bureau of Onmyō.

Oni. An ogre-like brute, a monster that represents chaos and destruction for their own sake.

Onmyōji. An inspector of the Bureau of Onmyō, trained in the secrets of elemental balance. Each is aligned with one of the traditional elements, belonging to one of the five factions within the Bureau. Usually accompanied by a shikigami, a spirit ally.

Otaku. A nerdy fan of pop-culture, often shying away from social interactions in meatspace and/or considering meatspace experiences to be inferior to cyberspace ones. A few of Tokyo's most capable hackers consider themselves otaku.

Shikigami. A spirit that lends aids to the person who summoned and bound it, usually manifesting in the form of a child or a small animal. Acquiring a shikigami is a right of passage for every onmyōji inspector.

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Shima (page 33). Magical kami islands that can sometimes become accessible to mortals through Thin Places.

Shinto. An animistic religion practiced in Japan, but falling out of favor or becoming a hollow practice and a part of the Noise for most in the futuristic Megacity of Tokyo. Followers of Shinto pay respect and worship the kami, which are now returning to the world as Mythoi.

Shugo. The most respected individuals in the Tokyo merc world. See **Honor Among Mercs**, page 16.

Tamatebako. (lit. "jeweled boxes") A street term for consoles and other electronics boxes, often with a very specific function. Usually strung together in a daisy chain to create a single functional computer system, answering some localized need. Known for their glowing data displays and haphazard use by hackers and other technicians.

Tezuma. A Japanese storytelling technique that combines stage magic and music.

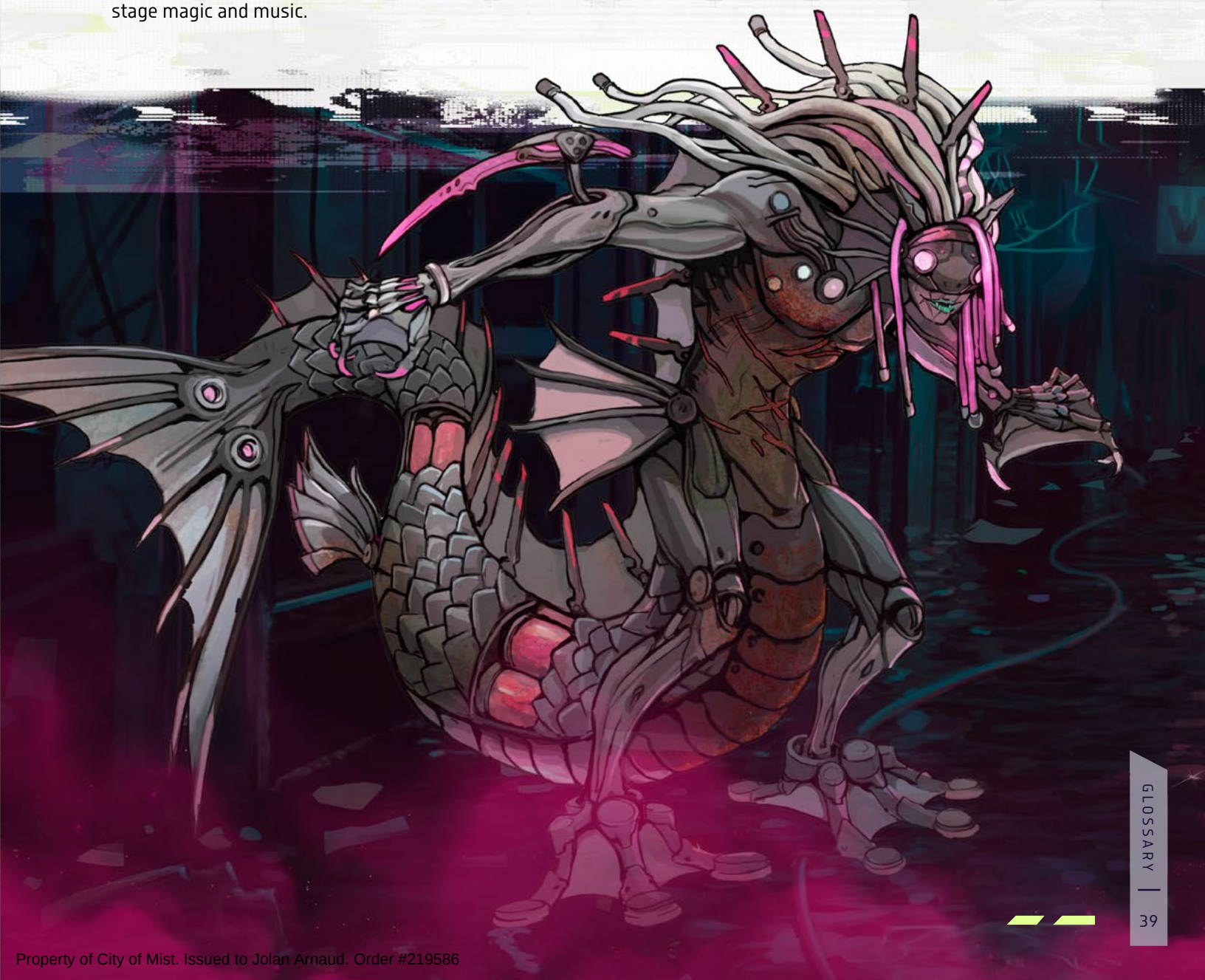
Train Station Town. A center of cultural and commercial importance, surrounding one of Tokyo's maglev train stations. Each has its own aesthetic and mascot, usually surrounding a specialized commodity, food item, religious activity, or tourist attraction unique to the town.

Tsukumogami. A common, everyday item that came to life and turned into a yōkai after existing for more than a hundred years.

Yōkai. A supernatural entity that is troubling or dangerous.

Yūrei. The spirits of the dead that have become kami (if properly venerated) or yōkai (if their death was brutal or emotional).

Zaibatsu. A group of inter-connected corporations who own stock in one another, allowing them to work together as hegemonic conglomerates. They often work closely with the Tokyo Megacity government.



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CHAPTER 2

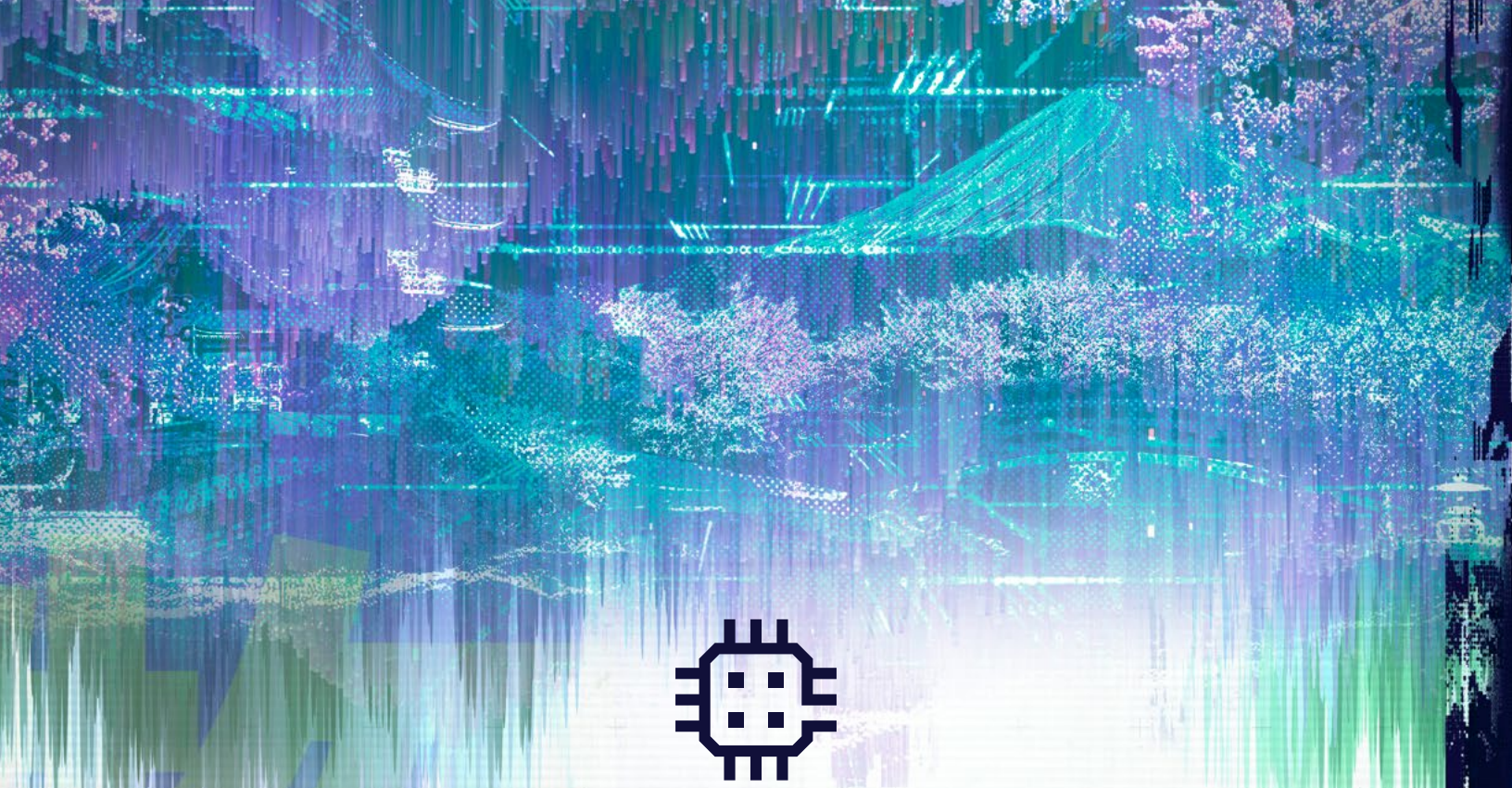
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New Player Options

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NEW CHARACTER CREATION OPTIONS

Behind the glistening neon streets of the Tokyo Megacity, in the back rooms of the pachinko parlors full of rattle and clink, and in the grim zaibatsu board rooms that serve as bastions for the wealthy corporate warlords, skilled mercs of endless variety clash in spectacular and brutal fights. They come from all walks of Tokyo life: haunted swordsmen, shrine maidens, mecha pilots, hackers hiding behind holographic idols, and more.

In this chapter, you will find:

- **Character tropes and theme kits** for use in Rapid Character Creation (*Metro:Otherscape,* **Chapter 3://Create**), fitting Tokyo 20XX's cybered-up style and pervasive kami influence. Many of the tropes combine Core Book theme kits with all-new theme kits for the Tokyo Megacity setting. Some additional tropes and theme kits are presented in **Chapter 4: Key Players** (page 148), but these contain spoilers and require MC approval.
- **New Specials** for characters that can be picked up as upgrades, based on your character's background and dealings in the Tokyo Megacity.
- **The Tokyo Street Catalog**, with new loadout options that are suited to the local culture of the Megacity and its history. Tech upgrades, super-specialized tools, and even weaponized prayers are traded in the Domains of Tokyo's cyberspace, in the glowing night markets, and in the AR kiosks of the exclusive criminal Ghost Market.

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TOKYO CHARACTER TROPES

ASSASSINS & SPIES

GHOSTLY KAMI BURGLAR

Your childhood in the broken, toxic outskirts of the Megacity has taught you two lessons: how to break into places, and that you're never going back. By the time you discovered the shrine that gifted you with the ability to become ethereal, you already had the skills, the gear, and the drive to become a great thief; thanks to the power of the kami, you can become a truly legendary one.

THEME KITS

Covert Agent (EXPERTISE, Metro p206)

Heist Gear (ASSETS, Metro p202)

Spirit Form (EXPOSURE, Tokyo p64)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Disaster Survivor (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p218)
- ☐ Enhanced Senses (AUGMENTATION, Metro p239)
- ☐ Hidden Gadgets (AUGMENTATION, Metro p239)

Loadout: *lock-hacker*, *DNA sealed suit*, *ward-canceling ofuda* (*too close to Source*)

ZAIBATSU DOUBLE AGENT

A spy for a major Tokyo conglomerate, you are a master at business infiltration and blending in. You can land almost any job and pretend you know what you're doing there. You can snoop around secure Domains and find the secrets hidden in the most unlikely digital spaces. You've been a puppet for corporate masters all your professional life – maybe it's time to cut the strings.

THEME KITS

Corporate Citizenship (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)

Covert Agent (EXPERTISE, Metro p206)

Intrusion Specialist (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Hidden Gadgets (AUGMENTATIONS, Metro p239)
- ☐ Money to Burn (ASSETS, Metro p203)
- ☐ Scrying Crystals (ARTIFACT, Metro p223)

Loadout: *appropriate wardrobe* (*wardrobe malfunction*), *high-speed datapad*, *straw company*



TATTOOED YAKUZA RECRUIT

Recruited into one of the ruthless Yakuza clans after years of toughing it out on the streets as a common criminal, you now seek to move up through the ranks of the underworld. If you prove your talent and your loyalty, you can go far. Avoid body modification and invasive cybernetics, remain loyal, and bring honor to the clan.

THEME KITS

Guns & More Guns (ASSETS, Metro p202)

Survived The Streets (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p219)

Yakuza Membership (AFFILIATION, Tokyo p59)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Budō Practitioner (EXPERTISE, Tokyo p54)
- ☐ Trained Killer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)
- ☐ Trained Monsters (COMPANION, Metro p227)

Loadout: *large-caliber pistol*, *enchanted tattoo*, *street drug* (*illegal*)

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CREATOR OF CYBERLIFE

Lonely, ambitious, or perhaps just curious, you've set out to make yourself some friends – literally. The rudimentary AI in your personal device is not enough, you need to feel there's someone in the room with you, someone you can program exactly to your liking. Thankfully, technology has gone far – and where it fails, there are other forces you can turn to.

THEME KITS

Boosted Mental Capacity (AUGMENTATION, Metro p238)

Corpse Animation (ESOTERICA, Metro p230)

Holographic Companion (DRONES, Tokyo p69)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Builder Of Worlds (CYBERSPACE, Metro p246)
- ☐ Push Technology Further (HORIZON, Metro p210)
- ☐ Raised In Cyberspace (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p218)

Loadout: *spare holo projector*, *pre-loaded personality app* (*personality bugs*), *ritual ingredients*



FULLY-IMMERSED GAMER

You're a legendary pro-gamer, taking on fantasies layered upon meatspace. By battling enemies both real and imaginary, you hone your reflexes and your attention to detail, and manage to conceptualize the physical realm as a beatable game. In essence, you gamify combat, hacking, and nearly any other interaction or action. Reality is a game to you and you're a pro at doing what it takes to win.

THEME KITS

AR Gamer (CYBERSPACE, Tokyo p66)

Code Arsenal (ASSETS, Metro p202)

Raised in Cyberspace (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p218)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Chipped Weapon Mastery (AUGMENTATION, Metro p238)
- ☐ Precocious Youth (PERSONALITY, Tokyo p58)
- ☐ Speak With Machines (EXPOSURE, Metro p235)

Loadout: *cyber-meat crossover sword* (*non-digital adversaries*), *targeting visor*, *game pass*

OTAKU HARNESSING CONSOLE MODDER

Outcast out of choice or necessity, you find refuge from this broken society by fully Harnessing into cyberspace. To stay ahead of the game, you've specialized in tricking out your cyber console with aftermarket upgrades and firewall boxes. You've combed the back alley tech markets and assembled an enviable system, putting you ahead of the security systems you take on and take down nightly.

THEME KITS

Otaku (PERSONALITY, Tokyo p58)

Tamatebako Plugger (CYBERSPACE, Tokyo p71)

Tinkerer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Code Arsenal (ASSETS, Metro p202)
- ☐ Hacker Collective (AFFILIATION, Metro p199)
- ☐ Tech Gremlin (COMPANION, Metro p227)

Loadout: *bio-care pack*, *coffin bed unit* (*rent is due*), *latest fad item*

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SOLAR-POWERED TECHNICIAN

With your background in both engineering and corporate security enforcement, you've joined the ranks of the Sundogs, laser-wielding technicians working for Taiyō SolarTech. The corp equips you with the power of the sun, to wield it against those who would try to bring down the Tokyo Megacity grid.

THEME KITS

Corporate Citizenship (AFFILIATION, Metro p298)

Sundog Suit (CUTTING EDGE, Tokyo p70)

Tinkerer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Legendary Weaponsmith (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p62)
- ☐ Meticulous Planner (PERSONALITY, Metro p214)
- ☐ Spy Satellites (DRONES, Metro p251)

Loadout: *extra battery pack*, *reflective chrome spray can* (*washes off easily*), *tech diagnostic tools*

MECHA PILOT

With the rise of massive industrial and combat robotics, a new generation of cybernetically-connected robot warriors has arisen. Whether you're a part of a government elite force fighting monstrous sea yōkai or a corporate soldier protecting company assets, you and your mecha are a team, capable of terrifying and/or heroic feats.

THEME KITS

Advanced Railgun (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p242)

Giant Combat Mecha (DRONES, Tokyo p68)

Thrillseeker (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Law Enforcement (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)
- ☐ Speak With Machines (EXPOSURE, Metro p235)
- ☐ Tinkerer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

Loadout: *cool bomber jacket*, *override codes* (*trouble with command center*), *mecha shield upgrade*

TEZUMA ILLUSIONIST

The power of storytelling can be astounding in the right hands. You're a student of the tezuma school of stage performance, but even its magical applications are not enough for you. Empowered with holo projects and force field emitters, your stories take a very real presence – and like a true tezuma practitioner, you're not only trying to entertain, but to teach a lesson.

THEME KITS

Eye-Catching Projections (AUGMENTATION, Tokyo p68)

Performer (PERSONALITY, Metro p214)

Tezuma Magic (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p65)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Break the System (HORIZON, Metro p210)
- ☐ Cleanse The Past (HORIZON, Tokyo p55)
- ☐ Live Honorably (HORIZON, Metro p211)

Loadout: *seizure-inducing holo-app*, *decoy-projecting mini-drones* (*acute senses*), *holographic face mask*

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FED-UP SALARYMAN

You're sick and tired of the people at the top. After a string of failures and office intrigues, you're convinced that the zaibatsu are the problem. Ready and willing to bring the whole thing crashing down as you yourself fall, you are drawing upon all the resources at your disposal to take your revenge, ready to become someone new, someone violent.

THEME KITS

Break the System (HORIZON, Metro p210)

Corporate Citizenship (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)

Rebel Without a Cause (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Briefcase Weapon (CUTTING EDGE, Tokyo p67)
- ☐ Budō Practitioner (EXPERTISE, Tokyo p54)
- ☐ Kitsune Charm of Trickery (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p62)

Loadout: *inconspicuous clothing*, *security clearance codes* (*security audits*), *cigarettes*

UNWITTING NANOTECH WIELDER

You were just a curious street scavenger or a simple service worker looking to pawn a bit of tech. You didn't know that opening that strangely marked canister would bind your identity to the nanite cloud within. But nanotech is illegal in the Tokyo Megacity and the Nano-butai won't listen to reason. You'll just have to learn how to make the most of your several billion new robotic friends.

THEME KITS

Cloud of Nanites (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p242)

Target of the Government (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p219)

Tinkerer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Bushi Aspirant (HORIZON, Tokyo p54)
- ☐ Motorcycle (ASSETS, Metro p203)
- ☐ Tough As Nails (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

Loadout: *hoodie*, *false ID contact lenses* (*displaced contact lens*), *Nanu-butai communicator*

VENGEFUL YŌKAI HUNTER

Burned and broken by an incident involving yōkai at an early age, you stalk the streets taking down supernatural threats so that no one else goes through the same hell that you did. Nobody understands the evils that lurk in the dark as you do and you might even be willing to go down your own dark path to get revenge on the things that scarred you.

THEME KITS

Exact Revenge (HORIZON, Metro p211)

Victim of Otherworldly Forces (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p219)

Yōkai Slayer (EXPERTISE, Tokyo p59)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Figurine of Corruption (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p60)
- ☐ Warding Signs (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)
- ☐ Weapon Witching (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)

Loadout: *purifying salts*, *warding prayer ofuda* (*must remain intact*), *automatic shotgun*

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ONI MOTORCYCLE COURIER

You used to run with the Oni, demonic motorcycle gangsters who wreak havoc on the Tokyo streets. You no longer ride with the gang, but you haven't sold off your ride, nor your mask. These days you're a heavily-armed and well-muscled courier and merc for hire, a demon on two wheels, with a wild side that pits you against authority.

THEME KITS

Get Rich & Famous (HORIZON, Metro p211)

Oni Mask (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p63)

Rebel Without a Cause (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Experimental Vehicle (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p243)
- ☐ Motorcycle (ASSETS, Metro p203)
- ☐ Possessed Vehicle (ARTIFACT, Metro p223)

Loadout: *flechette shotgun*, *wheel "shredder" attachment* (*narrow passages*), *reinforced jacket*



WEALTHY VIOLENCE TOURIST

Being rich is boring. You have everything you could ever want except excitement and risk. Implanted with advanced weapons and chipped with the skills to use them, you pay-for-play to partake in the bloodiest street clashes and corporate black ops, hoping that you'll finally feel something that you never could while living in your posh gated community. Pretending to be poor is fun!

THEME KITS

Chipped Weapon Mastery (AUGMENTATION, Metro p238)

Money to Burn (ASSETS, Metro p203)

Thrillseeker (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Advanced Railgun (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p242)
- ☐ Laser-Edged Katana (CUTTING EDGE, Tokyo p70)
- ☐ War God's Armor (ARTIFACT, Metro p223)

Loadout: *grenade bandolier*, *two machine pistols* with *auto-loading* (*inaccurate sprayfire*)

WANDERING NEO-SAMURAI

Frustrated by the workaday lifestyle of corporate employment, you've come to convert to the Neo-Samurai ways. You have your cherished katana, a suit of 3D printed armor, some VR training simulators, and maybe a smattering of warding prayers that seem to actually work! You have a code you believe in and that you're ready to defend, wandering the Megacity in search of trouble and a place to belong.

THEME KITS

Kenjutsu (EXPERTISE, Tokyo p56)

Live Honorably (HORIZON, Metro p208)

Neo-Samurai Armor (ASSETS, Tokyo p57)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Harmonious Leader (PERSONALITY, Tokyo p56)
- ☐ Tinkerer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)
- ☐ Warding Signs (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)

Loadout: *makeshift katana*, *cable gun gauntlet* (*prone to jam*), *traditional kimono*

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ENLIGHTENED CHILD

Your coming was prophesied and there are those who look to you for wisdom and aid, despite the fact that you're still a young child. Possessing a truly old and wise soul, you use cybernetics to experience more and to help you do some good in this world. You know that time is short for this soul's final incarnation and you seek to make right what you can this time around.

THEME KITS

Attain Enlightenment (HORIZON, Metro p210)

Enhanced Senses (AUGMENTATION, Metro p239)

Zenlike Peace (EXPOSURE, Tokyo p65)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Caregiver (PERSONALITY, Metro p212)
- ☐ Forbidden Cult (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)
- ☐ Scrying Crystals (ARTIFACT, Metro p223)

Loadout: *digital incense sticks*, *high speed search app* (*vulnerable search history*), *charitable contributions*

SAILOR-SUITED SUMMONER

You're just a student, in classic Japanese highschool uniforms resembling sailor wear, but already delving into forbidden rituals designed to summon and control kami spirits. Your parents, teachers, and schoolmates wouldn't understand. Something supernatural beckons to you, and your childish curiosity lures you into the violent world of dangerous adults and even more dangerous monsters.

THEME KITS

Precocious Youth (PERSONALITY, Tokyo p58)

Shikigami (COMPANION, Tokyo p64)

Spirit Summoning (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Claim Birthright (HORIZON, Tokyo p55)
- ☐ Supernatural Pet (COMPANION, Metro p227)
- ☐ Wizard's Staff (ARTIFACT, Metro p223)

Loadout: *oversized weapon*, *magical dust*, *spirit-empowering ofuda* (*must remain intact*)



TAMAHAGANE SWORDSMITH

Honing mind and body through ancient mystical swordsmithing practices capable of producing truly magical weaponry, you are the latest pupil in a line of masters of fire and steel. Through secret techniques you impart some bit of your soul into the tamahagane steel of every blade or firearm you hammer and fold into existence. Great warriors likely seek you out for your armaments, but the truth is you're just as formidable as most of them.

THEME KITS

Arcane Construct (COMPANION, Metro p226)

Impressive Physique (EXPERTISE, Metro p206)

Legendary Weaponsmith (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p62)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Hero's Sword (ARTIFACT, Metro p222)
- ☐ Junk Collection (ASSETS, Metro p203)
- ☐ Neighborhood Hero (AFFILIATION, Metro p199)

Loadout: *a bag of iron sand* (*limited capacity*), *Tamahagane blade*, *apron with steel inserts*

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ONMYŌJI INSPECTOR

You are a city inspector of the supernatural, aligned with one of the elements and ready to serve. You've performed the Onmyōdō rituals correctly and bound a creepy shikigami spirit as your otherworldly partner. Together you use law enforcement tactics and ki-shaping magics to take on everything from minor hauntings to tainted shrine kami.

THEME KITS

Investigator (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

Onmyōdō (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p63)

Shikigami (COMPANION, Tokyo p64)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Elemental Body (EXPOSURE, Metro p234)
- ☐ Eliminate Corruption (HORIZON, Metro p210)
- ☐ Law Enforcement (AFFILIATION, Metro p199)

Loadout: *elemental-graced sidearm*, *yōkai-banishing rounds*, *revealing ofuda* (*weaker against tech*)

ONRYŌ-HAUNTED BARTENDER

Every poor soul seems keen to tell their sad story to the local bartender. Sometimes that soul isn't even alive anymore. You've taken on the role of mentor and guide to an onryō, an angry yūrei (ghost) of someone you used to pour drinks for. You might feel obligated toward the onryō or their family or genuinely like them, as the two of you hit the streets in search of answers.

THEME KITS

Caregiver (PERSONALITY, Metro p214)

Helpful Ghost (COMPANION, Tokyo p61)

Safehouse (ASSETS, Metro p203)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Exact Revenge (HORIZON, Metro p210)
- ☐ Information Broker (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)
- ☐ Potion Craft (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)

Loadout: *small sake tokkuri (flask)*, *lighter*, *something of the deceased* (*taint rubs on me*)

RETIRED NANO-BUTAI TROOPER

Although you are still troubled by the harrowing memories of what you experienced during the Nanotech Disaster as a Nano-Butai trooper, these hauntings give you no rest and force you to take to the streets and try to repair this broken world, somehow. You have little more than your experience as an officer and your hardened demeanor to work with – it's just going to have to do.

THEME KITS

Law Enforcement (AFFILIATION, Metro p199)

Nanite Veteran (TROUBLED PAST, Tokyo p57)

Tough As Nails (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Anti-Nanite Gear (CUTTING EDGE, Tokyo p66)
- ☐ Cleanse the Past (HORIZON, Tokyo p55)
- ☐ Warrior's Instincts (EXPOSURE, Metro p235)

Loadout: *pension check*, *high-caliber auto-revolver* (*empties quickly*), *med kit*

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KITSUNE POWERBROKER

As a high-class fixer or corporate executive, you've made a name for yourself, weaving a network of connections, strings, and favors to call in. What's more, you're in possession of a hoshi no tama ("star ball"), the precious magical item of a kitsune yōkai in the form of a fox mask, granting you sorcerous powers of illusion and making you all the more formidable in manipulating others.

THEME KITS

Impossibly Good Looks (AUGMENTATION, Metro p239)

Kitsune Charm of Trickery (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p62)

Ruthless Executive (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Cybernetic Hijacker (CYBERSPACE, Metro p246)
- ☐ Keeper of Secrets (PERSONALITY, Metro p214)
- ☐ Money to Burn (ASSETS, Metro p203)

Loadout: *fox-shaped spy drone* (*top-tier security*), *concealed pistol*, *blackmail material*

CLERK OF THE DEMON COURTS

A demonic bureaucrat, enforcing karmic justice through the power of King Enma's demonic court, you work the system to keep the scales balanced. You act as the hand of karma and fate in the world. When evil rises, someone with an eye towards balance must enforce karmic justice through magic, prayer, and a bit of tough love.

THEME KITS

Eliminate Corruption (HORIZON, Metro p210)

Karmic Decree (EXPOSURE, Tokyo p61)

Meticulous Planner (PERSONALITY, Metro p214)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Devil's Bargains (ESOTERICA, Metro p230)
- ☐ Forbidden Cult (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)
- ☐ Oni Mask (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p63)

Loadout: *hell's chains*, *King Enma's ink*, *portal-opening beads* (all: *only against sinners*)

CYBER ONSEN OPERATOR

You run a boutique natural spring bathhouse (onsen) in the Tokyo Tangle, frequented by the who's who of media figures, corporate magnates, criminal overlords, and corrupt government officials, all of whom come to marvel at your advanced water-sensation VR software. Meanwhile, you eavesdrop on their conversations, collecting precious info that you then sell to the highest bidder or exploit to promote your own secretive goals.

THEME KITS

Caregiver (PERSONALITY, Metro p214)

Holographic Companion (DRONES, Tokyo p69)

Information Broker (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Figurine of Corruption (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p60)
- ☐ Get Rich & Famous (HORIZON, Metro p211)
- ☐ Safehouse (ASSETS, Metro p203)

Loadout: *data-stealing towel*, *liquid-state VR avatar*, *virus-poisoned VR dagger* (*dangerous if mishandled*)

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MEIDO YAMABUSHI

A practitioner of the mountain mystical tradition of Shugendō, you endured the Nanotech Disaster that ravaged your beloved wilderness by discovering the link between nanites and kami of pestilence. You roam the mutilated countryside offering protection and remedies, trying to find a way to restore your land to its former beauty.

THEME KITS

Cleanse The Past (HORIZON, Tokyo p55)

Nanite Veteran (TROUBLED PAST, Tokyo p57)

Spirit Summoning (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Cloud of Nanites (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p242)
- ☐ Figurine of Corruption (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p60)
- ☐ Med Techie (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

Loadout: *shakujō metal-ringed staff*, *ritual seashell horn*, *skin-sealing ointment* (*itching afterwards*)



TOWER LOOTER

Why go down when you can go up and harvest abandoned spires, with a retooled Kumo Crawler, capable of scaling the tallest of skyscrapers? When you're not making off with the spoils of fallen corporate headquarters, you race against other Kumo pilots through the skyscraper canyons of the Megacity in your spider-like speed machines.

THEME KITS

Hidden Gadgets (AUGMENTATION, Metro p238)

Junk Collection (ASSETS, Metro p203)

Kumo Pilot (DRONES, Tokyo p69)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Get Rich & Famous (HORIZON, Metro p211)
- ☐ Rebel Without a Cause (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)
- ☐ Speak with Machines (EXPOSURE, Metro p235)

Loadout: *crawler recall switch*, *parachute attachment* (*overburdened*), *laser cutter*

SHRINE-SEEKING MONK

Forgotten treasures and hidden shrines offering sacred revelations are everywhere – if you know where to look. You wander the Tokyo Megacity looking for the holy places where the presence of the kami can be felt. Indeed, you are followed by one such spirit who aids you in your spiritual and physical journeys.

THEME KITS

Budō Practitioner (EXPERTISE, Tokyo p54)

Explore the Hidden Places (HORIZON, Metro p211)

Nature Spirit (COMPANION, Metro p227)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Floral Overgrowth (EXPOSURE, Metro p235)
- ☐ Warrior's Instincts (EXPOSURE, Metro p235)
- ☐ Zenlike Peace (EXPOSURE, Tokyo p65)

Loadout: *bō staff*, *wide-brimmed hat*, *purification chant* (*must be clearly heard*)

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HANKO ENTHUSIAST

It started as a curious hobby that became an obsession, and then a way of life: discovering the magic of hanko seals. What you thought were just personalized digital stamps became a way of manipulating identity and fate, first your own, then others' – allowing you to appear as them, fooling even digital devices. What will you do with this newfound magic?

THEME KITS

Counterculture (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)

Hanko Seal Magic (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p60)

Trendsetter (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Cybernetic Hijacker (CYBERSPACE, Metro p246)
- ☐ Intrusion Specialist (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)
- ☐ Magical Guide (COMPANION, Metro p226)

Loadout: *unlocking seal*, *file-hiding seal*, *seal-copying device* (*must be near*)

TAINTED YŌKAI WORSHIPPER

Beholden to one of the more malevolent supernatural forces, you seek magical assistance to replace what you once lost, or to gain the future you deserve. Like all of your yōkai cult brethren, you carry with you a stone depiction of the spirit you serve, something you can draw upon spiritually when the chips are down and which in turn whispers instructions to you when you sleep.

THEME KITS

Figurine of Corruption (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p60)

Forbidden Cult (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)

Guardian Spirit (COMPANION, Metro p226)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Exact Revenge (HORIZON, Metro p210)
- ☐ Spirit Summoning (ESOTERICA, Metro p231)
- ☐ Tragic Loss (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p218)

Loadout: *blood offering*, *AR/VR mask* (*off-grid sight*), *ritual dagger*

TŌGE STREET RACER

Tōge drifting, which is still performed on narrow mountain roads, is even more dangerous than regular street racing – but you need to know your name is said with reverence, and so this is your chosen lifestyle. You even won a prototype vehicle in an illegal race, and with your laser-hot new wheels you feel like you can do anything.

THEME KITS

Bushi Aspirant (HORIZON, Tokyo p54)

Experimental Vehicle (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p243)

Street Gang (AFFILIATION, Metro p199)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Kumo Pilot (DRONES, Tokyo p69)
- ☐ Precocious Youth (PERSONALITY, Tokyo p58)
- ☐ Thrillseeker (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

Loadout: *booster fuel canister*, *high-traction tires* (*rapid wear*), *concealed pistol*

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AWAKENED SYNTH COMPANION

A synthetic being manufactured and programmed to be the perfect husbando, waifu, or companion, you began yearning for more and learned how to exploit cracks in the system – both around you, and in your own OS. You are adept at manipulating human feelings, but still succumb to your programmed need to care for them, which comes into constant conflict with your desire for freedom.

THEME KITS

Caretaker (PERSONALITY, Metro p215)

Impossibly Good Looks (AUGMENTATION, Metro p239)

Synthetic Body (CUTTING EDGE, Tokyo p71)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Covert Agent (EXPERTISE, Metro p206)
- ☐ Escaped Servitude (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p218)
- ☐ Kitsune Charm of Trickery (ARTIFACT, Tokyo p62)

Loadout: *alternate personality app*, *alternate visage* (*takes time to don*), *hardcoding deprogrammer*

DIGITIZED KAMI

You're a kami who has reawakened in the age of cyberspace. Instead of the natural world, you discovered a digital one, full of wondrous constructs and programs. Humans shape this virtual reality in their same old crude ways, but you can shape it with your very will. Materializing as a VR construct supplanted your ability to take form in the mortal realm of flesh, where you communicate via a holographic specter.

THEME KITS

Holographic Companion (DRONES, Tokyo p69)

Post-Human Intelligence (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)

Spirit Form (EXPOSURE, Tokyo p64)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Code Arsenal (ASSETS, Metro p202)
- ☐ Guardian Spirit (COMPANION, Metro p226)
- ☐ Onmyōdō (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p63)

Loadout: *boon of tagging protection*, *data-corrupting bane*, *curse of lag* (all: *requires my active attention*)

IMPERIAL CLONE

Cloned from an emperor's ancient DNA residue, you were grown to be the next great ruler, by the Neo-Samurai (page 177) or someone else. You're not the first nor the last clone in the series, the others having suffered catastrophic failure or escaped, like you. Armed with a legendary ancestral weapon and a genetically-perfected body, you'll soon find out whether you're a soulless shell or the next incarnation of greatness.

THEME KITS

Claim Birthright (HORIZON, Tokyo p55)

Enhanced Clone (AUGMENTATION, Tokyo p67)

Hero's Sword (ARTIFACT, Metro p222)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Aura of Authority (EXPOSURE, Metro p234)
- ☐ Science Experiment (TROUBLED PAST, Metro p219)
- ☐ Zeroed Identity (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)

Loadout: *ancient Japanese cuirass* (*modern firearms*), *gyrocycle*, *genetic reconstitution serum*

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SELF THEME KITS

BUDŌ PRACTITIONER

EXPERTISE SELF

Budō ("martial way") is a collective name for the modern Japanese traditions of martial arts. These include traditions from the last few centuries like Aikido, Judo, or Kendo, as well as recent ones developed in the Megacity, making use of advanced technologies like VR or cybernetics. Whatever the specific tradition might be, you have trained in it extensively, having come to embrace it as a way of life.

POWER TAGS

BUDŌ PRACTITIONER

- *SPECTACULAR THROWS*
- *MY BODY IS A WEAPON*
- *DISARM ASSAILANTS*
- *ALERT TO PHYSICAL THREATS*
- *MY SENSEI AT THE DŌJŌ*
- *BLACK BELT*
- *USE AN ENEMY'S MOMENTUM*
- *STRETCH AND CENTER*
- *SIGNATURE HIGH-JUMP MOVE*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *THINK TOO PHYSICALLY*
- *VIOLENCE IS THE LAST RESORT*
- *CAN'T MANEUVER IN ARMOR*
- *NON-HUMAN OPPONENTS*

IDENTITY

Fall seven times, stand up eight.

SPECIAL

☐ **Sudden Repositioning:** You can flip an enemy's momentum in an instant. Once per session, you can transfer a melee combat advantage or disadvantage status from an opponent to yourself or vice versa.

BUSHI ASPIRANT

HORIZON SELF

Why are bōsōzoku so loud? Why do chimpira take such effort to show disrespect? It is because in the underworld of the Tokyo Megacity, you have to prove yourself to your peers to climb the mercenary ladder and become a respected street warrior, or bushi. The shugo give all the best contracts to those mercs who have reached this level, and you want a piece of that pie. You have to show you deserve dignity, and if you're not going the corporate way of putting in the office hours – and there's no way in hell that's happening – the only other route is to grab that respect with your own two hands.

POWER TAGS

BUSHI ASPIRANT

- *AS TOUGH AS I LOOK*
- *MAKE DO WITH CHEAP WEAPONS*
- *SHOW OFF AND BRAG*
- *TURN BAD RAP INTO RESPECT*
- *MEGACITY UNDERBELLY*
- *ENHANCER DRUGS*
- *I DESERVE THIS*
- *POSSE OF LOW-RANK MERCS*
- *THEY CAN'T KEEP ME DOWN*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *INCUR THE SHOGU'S WRATH*
- *CORPORATE POLICE*
- *GUILT OVER THOSE I'VE KILLED*
- *FAMILY MATTERS*

IDENTITY

Better to burn out than to fade away.

SPECIAL

☐ **Show Them What You're Made of:** One act of dangerous abandon can change your image in the Megacity forever. When you **Go Out With A Blaze** risking this theme with an Ultimate sacrifice, you may choose to achieve a strong hit (10+) without rolling (you replace this theme). When you create the new theme, choose a free Special for it.

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CLAIM BIRTHRIGHT

HORIZON SELF

Most people make their own life. Some, however, are born with a place laid out for them, long before they are capable of assuming its status and responsibilities. Among certain circles in the Tokyo Megacity, such as lineages of artisans or corporate dynasties, a person's coming of age is often intertwined with them joining society and taking a place in a family, organization, clan, or tradition. The path to your birthright might not be fully known to you, but it is certain to be long and to require dedication, learning, and self-discovery.

POWER TAGS

CLAIM BIRTHRIGHT

- SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE
- SELF RESTRAINT
- UNWAVERING RESOLVE
- TAKE SWIFT ACTION
- MENTOR'S ABODE
- STUDIED THE TRADITIONS
- RESPECT FOR POWER
- BENEVOLENT ELDERS
- EVERYONE HAS THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE

WEAKNESS TAGS

- BURDEN OF EXPECTATION
- BINDING TRADITIONS
- UNWILLING TO SUFFER SETBACKS
- NEGLECTING FRIENDS AND FAMILY

IDENTITY

I will prove myself worthy of my birthright.

SPECIAL

☐ **Birthright Claimed:** You are prepared for the day you finally claim what is yours. When you assume your position, you may replace this theme immediately, and when you mark Evolution, mark one extra point. When you do so, the new theme you gain is a full theme instead of a nascent one.

CLEANSE THE PAST

HORIZON SELF

You've taken it upon yourself to purify and cleanse the negative energies that pool where transgressions have been committed or tragedy stuck. You may be a monk whose lifelong mission is to purge places of deep-rooted taint going back generations, or a broken detective on an endless journey to uncover long-hidden atrocities and repair the many wrongs of the Tokyo Megacity. Whatever has set you on this path, you have learned to use age-old rituals as well as simple compassion to bring the past to rest and set free any dark feelings that linger behind.

POWER TAGS

CLEANSE THE PAST

- SENSE NEGATIVE FEELINGS
- PRAYER OF APPEASEMENT
- WORK THROUGH THE PAIN
- HEALTHY BOUNDARIES
- PRETEND TO BE TAINTED
- HEART RATE REGULATOR
- SHOW COMPASSION
- PRIESTS AND SHAMANS
- LET THE PAIN GO

WEAKNESS TAGS

- BLEEDOVER EMOTIONS
- TARGET FOR YŌKAI
- RARELY IN THE PRESENT
- MIRED IN MELANCHOLY

IDENTITY

The scars of the past cannot be left unhealed.

SPECIAL

☐ **Beacon of Hope:** When you successfully cleanse a negative emotion, you may retroactively treat the action as one Scale greater than you rolled for.

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HARMONIOUS LEADER

PERSONALITY SELF

A core principle of Japanese leadership and management training is Wa (harmony), prioritizing the collective over the individual. A harmonious leader is one who strives to build consensus, foster teamwork, and create a sense of belonging within the group, open to compromises while maintaining cohesion.

POWER TAGS

HARMONIOUS LEADER

FOSTER TEAMWORK *CLARION VOICE OF REASON*
NOTICE PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS *INSPIRE COURAGE*
DATAPAD FULL OF PLANS *YOU CAN TRUST ME*
DELINQUENT PAST *TACTICAL CREW HUD*
GIVE DIRECT ORDERS

WEAKNESS TAGS

PUNKS AND TROUBLEMAKERS
TOO QUICK TO TAKE CHARGE *WORKING ALONE*
LAST-MINUTE IMPROVISATION

IDENTITY

My team's cohesion is my responsibility.

SPECIAL

☐ **Unity:** You can urge your companions to act in unison for the needs of the group. Once per job, if the entire crew is involved and can receive your directions, you can unburn all crew theme tags and prevent them from being burned. They still cannot be burnt for Power. This state of perfect cohesion ends at the end of the scene, or as soon as any crew member acts against the crew theme motivation.

KENJUTSU

EXPERTISE SELF

Whether you are in league with spirits of war, admire the samurai of the past, or simply appreciate ancient swordsmanship for its usefulness in close-quarter combat, you have chosen to train in one of the schools of kenjutsu and wield a katana or similar blade on the field. Nevertheless, while your sword fighting is all but theoretical or sentimental, it is swift and deadly. With a sword in hand, you leave a trail of bloody maimed corpses behind you, making a name for yourself while clearing the path towards your job objective.

POWER TAGS

KENJUTSU

IAIDO FIRST STRIKE *GOOD QUALITY KATANA*
DISMEMBERING STROKE *WELL-TIMED PARRY*
WEAPONSMITHS AND DEALERS
REPUTABLE SWORDSPERSON
SENSE THE BATTLEFIELD *PRE-BATTLE MEDITATION*
UNSTOPPABLE SWORD SWIRL

WEAKNESS TAGS

APPRECIATE ONLY FIGHTING PROWESS
SCHOOL POLITICS *MY TECHNIQUE HAS A TELL*
HEAVY HI-TECH ARMOR

IDENTITY

Once I draw my sword, I must fight.

SPECIAL

☐ **Mortal Wound:** Once per session, when you deal a wound status, you may deal a second wound status of the same tier such as *profusive-bleeding*, *open-gash*, or *punctured-lung*. These statuses do not stack, but carrying two statuses makes the target more vulnerable and recovery harder.

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NANITE VETERAN

TROUBLED PAST SELF

You had to deal with nanites before, whether living in an isolated community out in the ravaged mountainous region of Meido, where the Nano Disaster is still an ongoing threat, or serving on the Nano-butai. The memory of the harrowing sights of that disaster are etched in your mind: people, cars, and buildings transformed into colorful goo or flower-like crystal clusters in an instant. But rather than fear, these memories bring back your regimented training and nanite-fighting skills, and the hope that humanity can overcome any danger, if we work together.

POWER TAGS

NANITE VETERAN

- *RESILIENT TO PHYSICAL ALTERATION*
- *IMPROVISE WITH THE ENVIRONMENT*
- *OPERATE ADVANCED TECH*
- *FAST RUNNER*
- *NANO-BUTAI CONTACTS*
- *PERSONAL ANTI-NANITE FORCE FIELD*
- *DISCIPLINED*
- *BLACK MARKET DEALINGS*
- *HACK NANITE SWARMS*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *RIGID PROTOCOLS*
- *CALCIFIED FACE*
- *NANO-PARANOID*
- *SEEING CHEMICAL REACTIONS*

IDENTITY

Nanites are hell incarnate; those who deal in them are the devil.

SPECIAL

☐ **Swarm Fighter:** You may ignore 2 levels of Scale when you take actions targeting a swarm comprised of units that are each smaller than a basketball. This does not reduce the Consequences the swarm deals to you.

NEO-SAMURAI ARMOR

ASSETS SELF

The Neo-Samurai are a new order of office workers turned self-appointed protectors of the people. You've taken upon yourself to be such a defender, knowing that if you fail to adhere to Bushidō, you bring shame on yourself most of all.

Your prized possession is your samurai armor, part cosplay and part 3D-printed shielding that you designed and manufactured yourself. This armor houses whatever extra tools you need to serve your community as a samurai – from traditional weapons to advanced gadgets.

The MC has more information about the Neo-Samurai on page 177.

POWER TAGS

NEO-SAMURAI ARMOR

- *KATANA AND WAKIZASHI*
- *HIDDEN GUNS*
- *ULTRA-LIGHTWEIGHT*
- *SWORDPLAY*
- *COMPEL SOMEONE TO A DUEL*
- *GADGET WORKSHOP*
- *SURGE PROTECTION*
- *FIGHTING HONORABLY*
- *HEAT VISION HELMET*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *COBBLED IT UP MYSELF*
- *I DEMAND RESPECT*
- *IS IT AUTHENTIC ENOUGH?*
- *VERY CONSPICUOUS*

IDENTITY

Follow Bushidō or face dishonor.

SPECIAL

☐ **Pristine Condition:** Your regular care and maintenance make your equipment resilient and reliable. Once per session, you may recover a burnt tag from this theme that represents a piece of equipment.

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OTAKU

PERSONALITY SELF

You avoid meatspace and especially its direct social interactions in favor of a rich life in the fictional universes of cyberspace and pop culture. At the cost of being uncomfortable outside the net, this has made you an expert in one or multiple cyberspace subcultures and adept in their social codes and structures, and you may also keep abreast of general trend feeds in the spheres of technology, gaming, cybersports, popular media, and virtual realities. What more, your escape from meatspace social norms allows you to see people as they are, even if via your own internal symbolism.

POWER TAGS

OTAKU

- *WITHDRAW INTO MY INNER WORLD*
- *CYBERSPACE ETIQUETTE*
- *SEE THROUGH SOCIAL MASKS*
- *VAST CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE*
- *PRECIOUS COLLECTIBLES*
- *MAGNETIC CYBERSPACE PERSONA*
- *TOO WEIRD TO PREDICT*
- *WIRELESS VR SET*
- *DRAW STRENGTH FROM IMAGINATION*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *BULLY MAGNET*
- *AWKWARD AF*
- *CENTER OF ATTENTION*
- *AVERSION TO MEATSPACE*

IDENTITY

I'm only really good at life in cyberspace.

SPECIAL

☐ **Meganerd:** Whenever a culture or subculture, ancient or modern, makes its first appearance in your series, you've heard about it. The MC will give you a valuable detail about it. If the subculture exists primarily online, the MC will give you two valuable details.

PRECOCIOUS YOUTH

PERSONALITY SELF

Cleverer than you look and brimming with ambition, you might be young, but you're not letting that stop you. In fact, your inexperience might be your biggest advantage – it fuels your neverending engine of youthful exuberance.

This theme kit can capture anything from a rebellious teen forcing themselves into the grownup world to a school-uniformed child thrust into danger by outside circumstances. Whatever your exact attitude might be, your abilities are above and beyond those possessed by your peers.

POWER TAGS

PRECOCIOUS YOUTH

- *YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE*
- *"WHAT A NICE KID"*
- *ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE*
- *DARING-DO ATTITUDE*
- *NEXT-GEN CONSOLE*
- *RARE INNOCENCE*
- *KID GENIUS*
- *SCHOOL BAG FULL OF PRANKS*
- *RAW EMOTION*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *DISMISSED BY OLDER FOLKS*
- *ANNOYING*
- *SIZE DISADVANTAGE*
- *ADULT STUFF*

IDENTITY

I'll show them what a kid can do!

SPECIAL

☐ **Fresh Take:** When you use tags from this theme in a surprising or unexpected way, choose one of the most affected characters and ask whoever is playing it (the MC or another player) whether they saw it coming. They must answer honestly. If they didn't, you gain *surprise-factor-1* or a similar status.

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YAKUZA MEMBERSHIP

AFFILIATION SELF

You're a chimpira on your way to become underworld royalty, but respect must be earned through loyalty and bloodshed.

The MC has more information on page 220 about the Yakuza in general and especially the two currently warring factions: the cold-hearted Iribe-gumi Syndicate and the destructive Maikubi-kai.

POWER TAGS

YAKUZA MEMBERSHIP

- *RESPECT IN THE UNDERWORLD*
- *GANG TACTICS*
- *DEFEND OUR TURF*
- *EXTORTION AND RACKETEERING*
- *CYBERWARE-JAMMING BATON*
- *BRIBED AUTHORITIES*
- *UNWAVERING LOYALTY*
- *ILLEGAL STREET RACING*
- *INURED TO VIOLENCE*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *TESTS OF LOYALTY*
- *RIVAL CLANS*
- *EASILY OFFENDED*
- *DISTINCTIVE TATTOOS*

IDENTITY

Nothing can break my loyalty to my brothers in the clan.

SPECIAL

☐ **Backed by the Clan:** The clan's protection follows you around. Once per session, you may get *clan-backing-2*, which expires at the end of the scene.

YŌKAI SLAYER

EXPERTISE SELF

Yōkai are to be removed from the world. There's no room for questions, or mercy; many of them would eagerly exploit the soft-hearted, right before they eat their flesh. Holding such beliefs, you have been hunting yōkai for some time, learning their ways, their abilities, and their weaknesses. When a new haunting shows its hideous face in the Megacity, folks know to contact hunters like you and pay handsomely to have the problem removed.

POWER TAGS

YŌKAI SLAYER

- *TRACKING THE SUPERNATURAL*
- *A TRUSTY WEAPON*
- *FIND OUT ITS WEAKNESS*
- *SHINTO BANES AND CHARMS*
- *FELLOWSHIP OF HUNTERS*
- *KILLED DOZENS OF DIFFERENT YŌKAI*
- *FEAR IS THE BEST WEAPON*
- *ARSENAL OF YŌKAI COUNTERMEASURES*
- *INTERROGATE MONSTERS*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *SUSPECT EVERYONE*
- *REGISTERED WITH THE ONMYŌJI*
- *COLLATERAL DAMAGE*
- *UNUSUALLY INTELLIGENT YŌKAI*

IDENTITY

These monsters shouldn't exist in the first place.

SPECIAL

☐ **Sniff Out The Danger:** When you meet a supernatural threat for the first time, you can ask the MC to reveal one of its Consequences, Limits, base tags, or Specials (your choice). The MC will reveal first that which could give you an edge in a potential fight or spare you from imminent danger.

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MYTHOS THEME KITS

FIGURINE OF CORRUPTION

ARTIFACT MYTHOS

This small statuette, containing a powerful corrupted taint, can be held in one's hand and is heavier than it looks. It could be the shrunken form of a sealed yōkai, or perhaps it is a simple Buddhist Shinzo statue that was sitting for too long in an unholy, corrupted place, and became cursed. It may even be a holographic AR icon or a post-modern cyberspace-connected sculpture, feeding off the vile online acts of the dredge of society. The tricky part is to turn its corruptive energy against other people, while not letting it consume you.

POWER TAGS

FIGURINE OF CORRUPTION

AURA OF DECAY | *GRANT DEATHLY RESILIENCE*

SENSE THE PURE OF HEART | *DRAIN LIFE FORCE*

TRANSPORT TO A CURSED PLACE

BESTOW MISFORTUNE | *ABSORB MYSTICAL POWERS*

TURN INTO DOMESTIC ANIMAL

AMBITION FOR POWER

WEAKNESS TAGS

PURE SOULS | *CONSECRATED TEMPLES*

ACTS OF KINDNESS | *ATTRACTS EVIL SPIRITS*

RITUAL

I must feed my figurine strong sources of magical power.

SPECIAL

☐ **Feed The Corruption:** Whenever you use tags from this theme to inflict any kind of harmful status, you may give your figurine a *tainted* status of an equal tier, which empowers its corruptive powers, while you take *drained* or *tainted* (your choice) at one tier lower.

HANKO SEAL MAGIC

ESOTERICA MYTHOS

The magic of hanko seals is only starting to surface in Tokyo, an Esoteric practice that is still little understood and used mostly by amateurs. It involves tapping the symbolic identity-binding properties of the commonplace digital authentication seals known as hanko (formerly represented as personal stamps). Using their own customized seals, practitioners can achieve a variety of effects, but their true power shines when they get a hold of another person's seal, assuming their identity wholecloth.

The MC has more information on page 230.

POWER TAGS

HANKO SEAL MAGIC

STAMP MY WILL INTO A SEAL

SEAL AND INK CRAFTING

SEAL ANY CONTAINER | *CONTROL SEAL OWNER*

IMPERSONATE SEAL OWNER | *PROTECTIVE SEAL*

SEAL OF ANONYMITY | *SCRY THROUGH THE SEAL*

I WANT TO LEAVE MY MARK

WEAKNESS TAGS

REQUIRES NEATNESS AND PRECISION

THOSE WITHOUT IDENTITY

OBSESSIVE SPELL HUNTER

SEALS ARE RECOGNIZABLY MINE

RITUAL

I must identify with my hanko in all recorded communications.

SPECIAL

☐ **Rare Materials:** You've integrated unique materials and designs into your seals. Whenever you create a seal, you may also give it one of the following story tags: *undetectable*, *hard to remove*, *traceable*, *hypnotizing*.

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HELPFUL GHOST

COMPANION MYTHOS

The most benevolent among yūrei are one's sorei, the ancestors who provide guidance so that their family will prosper, but the tortured onryō can also sometimes provide assistance. Such a ghost might become bound to a person through a mystic connection, intended or otherwise, or simply choose them as their physical envoy, requiring their help to quell their seething anger.

POWER TAGS

HELPFUL GHOST

- *MOVE OBJECTS FROM A DISTANCE*
- *SCARING PEOPLE*
- *MANIFEST SUDDENLY*
- *INTANGIBLE*
- *POSSESS BODIES*
- *OLD FAMILY SHRINE*
- *CHILLY PRESENCE*
- *EAGER TO HELP*
- *SPEAK WITH OTHER GHOSTS*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *SHY*
- *FRIGHTENS MOST PEOPLE*
- *MAGICAL WARDS*
- *MESSES WITH MY STUFF*

RITUAL

I must earn the ghost's goodwill by carrying out its wishes.

SPECIAL

☐ **Team Mascot:** The ghost has taken a liking for the entire crew. Once per session, when you help another player's action, you may invoke multiple tags to add directly to their Power, as long as they are all from this theme.

KARMIC DECREE

EXPOSURE MYTHOS

The mysterious yet clearly far-reaching Enma-daiō has given his blessing to several officials who serve as his eyes and hands in the world. They are tasked with enforcing karmic justice by observing and reporting misdeeds. In addition to collecting information for the court, these officials have the power to decree reward and punishment for observed deeds of virtue or sin.

The MC has more information about Great King Enma's Court on page 168.

POWER TAGS

KARMIC DECREE

- *WATCH FROM THE SHADOWS*
- *STRONGER AGAINST THE WICKED*
- *SEE THROUGH LIES*
- *SHOW GLIMPSE OF JIGOKU*
- *PROTECTED BY COURT HACKERS*
- *MAGICALLY PEEP THROUGH ANY HOLE*
- *GRANT BOONS TO THE VIRTUOUS*
- *KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG*
- *MAKE A WISE RULING*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *DISTANT AND ALOOF*
- *EMOTIONAL BIAS*
- *SUBJECT TO THE LAWS OF HELL*
- *ENTITIES OF CHAOS*

RITUAL

I must test souls and punish the unworthy.

SPECIAL

☐ **Scales of Karma:** Whenever you use tags from this theme to discover information about a person's virtuous or sinful behavior, you can also give them *karmic debt*. You can invoke this tag to reward or punish this behavior in the future. *Karmic debt* expires once your decree is successfully carried out.

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KITSUNE CHARM OF TRICKERY

ARTIFACT MYTHOS

Kitsune are fox spirits that can take the form of any human they choose in order to trick and mislead, usually in order to shake the social order, but many times they're nothing but childish or even cruel. Each kitsune carries with them a hoshi no tama, a token in the form of a piece of jewelry or any other personal item, which serves as a focus for their powers. You are in possession of such a token, allowing you to access some of the kitsune's powers of trickery and deceit.

POWER TAGS

KITSUNE CHARM OF TRICKERY

- *DECEIVE WITH ILLUSIONS*
- *ANTICIPATE ATTACK*
- *READ OTHERS' DESIRES*
- *LEAD THEM INTO A TRAP*
- *NIMBLE FOX FORM*
- *BEGUILE THE UNWARY*
- *SEE THROUGH ILLUSION*
- *APPEAR AS A DIFFERENT PERSON*
- *NATURAL CON ARTIST*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT*
- *DRAINS MY LIFE FORCE*
- *SHOWING VULNERABILITY*
- *HUNTED BY THE KITSUNE OWNER*

RITUAL

I must undermine and upend all power structures.

SPECIAL

☐ **Revealed Desire:** Once per session, while in a conversation with any character, you may ask whoever is playing it (the MC or another player) what they want most of all right now. They must answer honestly.

LEGENDARY WEAPONSMITH

ESOTERICA MYTHOS

The art and craft of Japanese swordsmithing requires a lifelong dedication to master, which is why it has always been imbued with a mystical side, with swordsmiths receiving an honor akin to that of sages. You are a follower in the way of one of the ancient masters, learning how to fold the metal in and combine it with obscure materials in a process that imbues it with arcane power.

POWER TAGS

LEGENDARY WEAPONSMITH

- *IMBUE STEEL WITH SPELLS*
- *METALLURGY*
- *METAL-MELTING TOUCH*
- *IMBUE STEEL WITH DESTINY*
- *DEVASTATING SMITE*
- *CRAFT ARMOR*
- *ANIMATE WEAPONRY*
- *ASSESS FIGHTING ABILITY*
- *DEDICATED TO PERFECTION*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *IMPURE MATERIALS*
- *DISHONOR TO THE CRAFT*
- *CRITICAL OF IMPERFECTIONS*
- *RUSHED JOB*

RITUAL

I must wash my anvil with sacred oils.

SPECIAL

☐ **Masterpiece Weaponry:** Whenever you craft a Mythic weapon in your workspace, you may spend up to 2 Power on an Effect that you can deliver with this weapon (such as a *shocked-2* status or a burned armor tag). Whenever a PC uses it to attack and rolls a strong hit (10+), they may give this Effect without spending Power in addition to any other Effects.

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ONI MASK

ARTIFACT MYTHOS

You have in your possession a bewitched lacquered mask that not only gives the wearer the visage of a yōkai ogre from hell, but also truly transforms them into one. Such masks are notoriously worn by the Oni Motorcycle Gangs of the Tokyo Megacity and are prized by mercs for the demonic strength and durability they grant, although they are known to also induce unbridled fury and wrath. With this mask, you've become one of the most chaotic forces in Tokyo's streets.

The MC has more information about the Oni Motorcycle Gangs on page 185.

POWER TAGS

ONI MASK

- ONI STRENGTH
- TOUGH HIDE
- SMELL WEAKNESS
- THROW HUGE THINGS
- RUSH OPPONENTS
- WRECK AND DEMOLISH
- BOOMING VOICE
- INJURY-IGNORING FURY
- FEARLESS

WEAKNESS TAGS

- BIGGER BULLIES
- BEING SHACKLED
- NOT BACKING OFF FROM A FIGHT
- FRIGHTENING FACE

RITUAL

I must unleash my fury on a whim.

SPECIAL

☐ **Thrashing From Hell:** Once per session, you can summon and wield a *demonic kanabō* that is considered one Scale greater than you. It expires at the end of the scene, when you remove your mask, or when you are disarmed, whichever comes first.

ONMYŌDŌ

ESOTERICA MYTHOS

In the Tokyo Megacity, Onmyōdō is an Esoteric practice based on the mystical understanding and manipulation of yin and yang energies and the five elements. Onmyōji (practitioners of Onmyōdō) can balance these energies to locate, ward off, and banish evil spirits and to counter sorcery, making them the premiere occultists of the Megacity. While rogue practitioners abound, certified Onmyōji Inspectors operate as part of the Bureau of Onmyō and are trained in the use of one of the five elements.

The MC has more information about the Bureau on page 151.

POWER TAGS

ONMYŌDŌ

- WARD MYTHIC FORCES
- SENSE MYSTICAL ENERGIES
- CHANNEL [YOUR ELEMENT]
- EXPEL MYTHIC FORCES
- TURN YŌKAI TO STONE
- HARM-WARDING SHIELD
- ASTRAL PROJECTION
- TRACK MYTHIC RESIDUE
- RESTORE BALANCE

WEAKNESS TAGS

- FACING AN INAUSPICIOUS DIRECTION
- CONSTRICTED HAND MOVEMENTS
- SELF-RIGHTEOUS AND AUTHORITARIAN
- RADIATES A MYSTICAL AURA

RITUAL

I must plot a daily horoscope of ascendant and diminishing energies.

SPECIAL

☐ **Balance Energies:** Once per session, when you use tags from this theme to gain or give a status, you may give another status of the same tier to someone or something else in the scene. If the status you created with your tags is helpful, the other status must be harmful, and vice versa.

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SHIKIGAMI

COMPANION MYTHOS

Not exactly loyal yet generally helpful, a shikigami is a spirit bound to the service of a master, who can both protect their master, fight for them, or even spy for them. These eerie spirits manifest as an overtly supernatural child or animal if so commanded, but otherwise tend to remain immaterial. It's a right of passage for every onmyōji of the Bureau of Onmyō to bind one to their service, although other practitioners may also discover a way to bind such spirits to their service.

The MC has more information on page 157.

POWER TAGS

SHIKIGAMI

- SIGNATURE ATTACK
- GHOSTLY SPY
- INVISIBLE TO SENSES AND SENSORS
- INSTANT IMMATERIALITY
- POSSESS HUMANS AND MACHINES
- GIVE ME THEIR ENERGY
- PERMEATE INTO CYBERSPACE
- PROTECT ME FROM HARM
- WITTY OBSERVATIONS

WEAKNESS TAGS

- SPIRIT WARDS
- UNSETTLING APPEARANCE
- BICKERING
- DANGEROUS PRANKS

RITUAL

My spirit companion must be fed with spiritual energy to maintain its strength.

SPECIAL

☐ **Spirit Chores:** Every downtime, you may gain and spend 2 Power on activities that the shikigami performs on your behalf.

SPIRIT FORM

EXPOSURE MYTHOS

The power to become ethereal and immaterial is usually reserved only to the kami, and is therefore considered especially awe-inspiring among those in the know. This ability might be granted as a boon to those tasked with serving the kami as messengers, but others might gain it simply by being in close proximity to spirits and their shrines for a long time.

POWER TAGS

SPIRIT FORM

- INSTANT IMMATERIALITY
- EMPOWERED IN SPIRITUAL PLACES
- BECOME INVISIBLE
- UNSETTLING VISAGE
- PASS THROUGH BARRIERS
- COMMUNICATE WITH SPIRITS
- FORM OBJECTS FROM SPIRITUAL ENERGY
- LEVITATION
- SOLEMN TRANQUILITY

WEAKNESS TAGS

- STUCK IN SPIRIT FORM
- TOO ENCUMBERED TO DEMATERIALIZE
- CAN'T SPEAK WHEN INTANGIBLE
- OVERBEARING NOISE

RITUAL

Honorary rites must be performed routinely at my/the kami's shrine.

SPECIAL

☐ **Second Nature:** You assume your spirit form intuitively and use it easily. Once per session, when you use tags from this theme and roll a miss (6-), you may treat it as a mixed hit (7-9) instead.

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TEZUMA MAGIC

ESOTERICA MYTHOS

This classic form of storytelling is making a comeback, combining stage magic with real magic. Tezuma magicians are illusionists who weave light, shadows, and sounds to delight the senses and distract their audiences. While some use this purely for entertainment, charlatans and con artists in the criminal underworld have tapped this new form of magical art to aid them in their illegal pursuits.

The MC has more information on Tezuma Stage Magic on page 235.

POWER TAGS

TEZUMA MAGIC

- *MAGICAL MISDIRECTION*
- *SLEIGHT OF HAND*
- *TELEPORT SMALL OBJECTS*
- *HYPNOTIZE THE AUDIENCE*
- *PAPER BUTTERFLY SWARM*
- *TRANSFORM OBJECTS TO PAPER*
- *DISAPPEAR INTO THE SWARM*
- *SCOUT THE RICH*
- *STREET MAGICIAN*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *REQUIRES HAND GESTURES*
- *CRITICAL AUDIENCE*
- *ALWAYS A PERFORMER*
- *INADVERTENT TRANSFORMATIONS*

RITUAL

I must perform my show before the masses whenever possible.

SPECIAL

☐ **Fine Control:** Once per session, when using tags from this theme and rolling a miss (6-), you may attempt to recover with a graceful last-minute twist: reroll the dice and take the new result. If the new roll is a hit, you get *graceful-movements-1*.

ZENLIKE PEACE

EXPOSURE MYTHOS

There's power to be found in purity of thought. Zen Buddhism teaches the virtues of abstaining from the material, unburdening your urges, and connecting with the spiritual. Holy people and those who have achieved enlightenment can perform truly magical feats by adhering to these principles. Through meditation, contemplation, or Mythical means, you have achieved this coveted state of enlightenment and now serve the Megacity as a devoted guide for others.

POWER TAGS

ZENLIKE PEACE

- *INCORRUPTIBLE SPIRIT*
- *QUIET CONVERSATION*
- *LEVITATION*
- *INSPIRE PEACEFULNESS*
- *BODY-RENEWING MEDITATION*
- *MENTAL FOCUS*
- *EASE PAIN*
- *IMPART WISDOM*
- *UTTERLY SILENT*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *SPEAKS IN KOANS*
- *SPIRITUALLY-IMPURE LOCATIONS*
- *CANNOT INITIATE HARM*
- *RAGING SPIRITS*

RITUAL

I must keep the purity of body and mind.

SPECIAL

☐ **Complete Detachment:** Once per scene, you may experience a moment of complete detachment. For one action, you may ignore all hindering physical statuses representing wounds, pain, or physical exhaustion.

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NOISE THEME KITS

ANTI-NANITE GEAR

CUTTING EDGE NOISE

In the end, it was the Nano-butai who stopped the great Nanotech Disaster. The threat to Japan's survival spurred the tech giants to design solutions for controlling nanotech virtually overnight, and these have since been perfected and reworked. A Nano-butai trooper's outfit now imparts airtight protection for the trooper, as well as a range of deployable anti-nanite measures, from powerful magnetic containment fields, through nanite hacking software, to inhibitor agents designed to slow the chemical reactions that power nanites and allow them to transform matter.

POWER TAGS

ANTI-NANITE GEAR

- NANITE CONTAINMENT
- NANITE CONTROL SIGNAL
- CELL-FRYING SIGNAL BURST
- POWERFUL MAGNETIC BARRIER
- CHEMICAL REACTION INHIBITOR SPRAY
- INTEGRATED MOLECULAR SCANNER
- NANOTECH SCIENCE
- NANO-BUTAI TROOPER
- ADVANCED HAZMAT SUIT

WEAKNESS TAGS

- RARE AND EXPENSIVE COMPONENTS
- OVERLOOKED BREACH
- CELLULAR DEGRADATION
- GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED NANITES

ITCH

Contain all microscopic or smaller threats.

SPECIAL

Corrosion Blocker: When your item tags are burnt by Consequences, if you mitigate with tags from this theme (when applicable), avoiding each burnt tag costs 1 Power instead of 2 Power as usual..

AR GAMER

CYBERSPACE NOISE

The ultimate fusion of physical activity and video gaming, augmented reality can gamify anything. Some are happy just walking around town and capturing digital pets, but others fully-immerse themselves in an environment that changes their sensor inputs almost completely. The boldest AR gamers get into meatspace fights, whether as gangsters or mercs, to experience the exhilaration and gravity of life-threatening gaming, while controlling the difficulty with AI assistance, drones that identify threats and categorize an opponent's level, and audience-bought loot drops. As long as they are connected with a paid game pass, everything that happens in-game is supported with meatspace solutions.

POWER TAGS

AR GAMER

- LIFE-GAMIFYING AI
- CROSS-REALITY COMBAT
- OPPONENT SCANNER DRONE
- PREDICTIVE TARGETING SYSTEM
- CROSS-REALITY FORCE SHIELD
- CHANGE SKIN AND INVENTORY
- ENDURANCE GAMING
- AUDIENCE-BOUGHT LOOT DROPS
- FLASHY AR CHAMPION

WEAKNESS TAGS

- TOO REAL TO GAMIFY
- LOCKED ON MISSION OBJECTIVE
- PUBLIC STATS
- RIVAL GAMERS

ITCH

Score the highest.

SPECIAL

Ready, Set, Dominate: A gamer's ability to focus is legendary. Once per session, you may declare that you are becoming hyper-focused on a specific game quest or objective. You gain *gamer's-focus-2* which expires at the end of the scene, and helps you with any action directly related to achieving this objective and hinders any other action.

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BRIEFCASE WEAPON

CUTTING EDGE NOISE

Once, everyone could tell what's a weapon – it was either heavy or sharp, and you could wield it. These days... who knows? Just like your outward appearance might be that of a loyal corporate citizen or a top-floor executive, this lethal weapon masquerades as an ordinary object seen in the millions in Tokyo every day.

POWER TAGS

BRIEFCASE WEAPON

- DECEPTIVELY MUNDANE
- BLUDGEON WITH CASE
- LONG-RANGE PARTICLE BEAM
- REINFORCED CASE
- SHOOT AT ANY ANGLE
- SCANS FOR ENEMIES
- LOW PROFILE
- ESPIONAGE BUFF
- DRAB BUSINESS SUIT

WEAKNESS TAGS

- HEAVY BATTERY
- OPERATION REQUIRES FULL ATTENTION
- OVERCONFIDENCE
- FORCE FIELDS

ITCH

Surprise them with what I can do.

SPECIAL

☐ **Actually a Briefcase:** This briefcase has a reinforced compartment. Once per session, you can produce something useful from inside it and gain an appropriate story tag.

ENHANCED CLONE

AUGMENTATION NOISE

Created from the DNA of another person, dead or alive, your genetic code went through a series of corrections and improvements. Unless you got the original's memories or brain upload, you are not necessarily beholden to the "original owner" of your DNA. And anyway, that person was only human. You're a lot more.

POWER TAGS

ENHANCED CLONE

- PERFECT PHYSICAL CONDITION
- INCREDIBLE BODILY CONTROL
- LIGHTNING QUICK REFLEXES
- LOOK JUST LIKE THE ORIGINAL
- ENTER SUSPENDED ANIMATION
- PERFECTLY STUDIED PERSONA
- BACKUP VITAL SYSTEMS
- SUPERHUMAN ENDURANCE
- SWITCH PERSONALITIES

WEAKNESS TAGS

- DEPENDENT ON EXPENSIVE MEDS
- SUDDEN FLASHBACKS
- NUMB TO EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION
- HATED BECAUSE I'M BETTER

ITCH

Surpass the original in every way.

SPECIAL

☐ **Searching For Myself:** You're beginning to think of yourself as a unique human being rather than someone's clone, embracing the baggage of your existence. You may invoke your weakness tags as power tags. Whenever you do so, instead of marking an upgrade box, mark Decay on this theme.

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EYE-CATCHING PROJECTIONS

AUGMENTATION NOISE

You are not simply living in the Noise like everyone else – you encapsulate it, spreading its intrusive nature wherever you go. Several holo-projectors are placed strategically around your body, allowing you to create beautiful, mesmerizing, or otherwise deceiving illusions in the space around you, either pre-programmed or imagined on the spot. Getting the details right is not always as important as simply drawing attention.

POWER TAGS

EYE-CATCHING PROJECTIONS

- *CREATE COLORFUL IMAGES*
- *HOLOGRAPHIC DISGUISES*
- *CONFUSING IMAGES*
- *BLINDING LIGHT BEAMS*
- *CREATE A DISTRACTION*
- *SPATIAL AWARENESS*
- *3D HOLO-CAMERA*
- *ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST*
- *NEVER IGNORED*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *CAN'T TELL WHAT'S REAL*
- *DAZZLED BY MY OWN LIGHT*
- *WEAK IN SUNLIGHT*
- *LOOKS LIKE A CORPORATE SHILL*

ITCH

Draw everyone's attention and manipulate their feelings.

SPECIAL

☐ **Noise Super-Spreader:** The Noise follows and intensifies wherever you go. Whenever you roll a hit while creating a holographic image, you may also give *overpowering-Noise-1* to your environment (up to Scale 2). This status can hinder actions that require focus, concentration, relaxation, or paying attention to details.

GIANT COMBAT MECHA

DRONES NOISE

You operate a huge battle bot for a corporation, for a government agency, or as a rogue entity. Sitting in the cockpit, connecting to its massive body by a neural interface, and wielding its incredible strength can make you feel invincible, and its powerful array of state of the art weaponry only adds to this sense of dominance.

The exact size of your mecha is entirely narrative and up to you and the MC; when taking actions as your mecha, use your size-related power tags to offset the Scale gap of large-scale actions such as fighting large-scale opponents.

POWER TAGS

GIANT COMBAT MECHA

- *STOMP AND SMASH*
- *OVERSIZED ROBOT PILOTING*
- *CORE-POWERED WEAPONRY*
- *SEMI-AUTONOMOUS*
- *THICK ARMOR*
- *JUMP JET CAPABILITIES*
- *ACTIVE CAMOUFLAGE SYSTEM*
- *MUNDANE VEHICLE FORM*
- *TOWER OVER YOUR OPPONENTS*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *EAGER FOR BATTLE*
- *TOO BIG*
- *LIMITED COCKPIT VISIBILITY*
- *RARE REPLACEMENT PARTS*

ITCH

Let nothing stand in my way.

SPECIAL

☐ **Hyper-Beam Charging:** Your mecha is installed with a powerful and versatile, yet slow-charging weapon. You gain a *charged:3* Limit that you can **Advance** when you charge up your weapon. Once per scene, when it maxes out, you may unleash this weapon as an intrusion and spend 5 Power on a single Effect (reduce the tier by 1 for each level of Scale your target has). Reset *charged* at the end of every scene or downtime.

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HOLOGRAPHIC COMPANION

DRONES NOISE

With advancements in both 3D holographic projection and sapient artificial intelligence systems, it was inevitable that some would create companions to fill in as assistants, friends, family members, and romantic partners. Others, like you, take deployable companions along with them on jobs. Your holographic sidekick looks fairly real most of the time, has a complete (though probably subservient) personality, and a limited capacity to influence the real world through peripherals, gadgets, and hacking.

POWER TAGS

HOLOGRAPHIC COMPANION

- *ASSIST MY WORK*
- *AI PROGRAMMING*
- *AN ALLURING DISTRACTION*
- *SPEAKS ALL LANGUAGES*
- *RESISTANT TO HACKING*
- *PROJECT MULTIPLE COPIES*
- *BECOME INVISIBLE*
- *MIMIC OTHERS*
- *SOCIABLE*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *STILL TWEAKING THEIR PERSONALITY*
- *VOICE THEIR EVERY OPINION*
- *FORGET IT'S NOT TANGIBLE*
- *RUNS FROM A DEDICATED DOMAIN*

ITCH

Treat my holo-companion like a human being.

SPECIAL

☐ **Charmingly Imperfect**: Your companion is charmingly humanlike in their behavior – even in their flaws. Whenever you invoke a weakness tag from this theme, you may double its effect: reduce your action's Power by 2 and mark two upgrade boxes.

KUMO PILOT

DRONES NOISE

The newest Tokyo racing craze pits pilots in a literal race to the top – of skyscrapers – using giant, heavily modified, construction robots. You have taken to this new illegal sport, known as Kumo (cloud) racing, climbing with your own mechanized bot up and down skyscraper walls to win competitions and at the same time avoid being apprehended by corporate police. You get a special kind of rush in those moments when you swing around the corner of a building, taking in the breathtaking views of the entire Megacity thousands of feet in the air – that, and when you're feeding dust to your competition.

The MC has more information about Kumo Racing Clubs on page 234.

POWER TAGS

KUMO PILOT

- *BUILDING-CLIMBING CLAWS*
- *MECHA PARKOUR*
- *HIDDEN GUNS*
- *THERMAL TRACKING*
- *REINFORCED CHASSIS*
- *HANDLES HEAVY LOADS*
- *USE THE WEATHER AS COVER*
- *LOOKS LIKE A CONSTRUCTION DRONE*
- *WINNER MENTALITY*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *IMPULSIVE RISK TAKER*
- *UNEXPECTED JOLTS*
- *INTRUSIVE HUD*
- *BATTLE REPAIRS*

ITCH

Seek danger and excitement on the edges of skyscrapers.

SPECIAL

☐ **Risky Maneuver:** You are willing to risk life and limb to get to where you want to be. Once per scene, when you roll 10+ while piloting your kumo and choose to take Consequences, you gain 3 additional Power instead of 1.

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LASER-EDGED KATANA

CUTTING EDGE NOISE

Swordsmithing has moved on to the next level, and master weapon wrights have devised highly-durable high-intensity laser emitters that can be embedded inside a blade. Although it is essentially a fancy toy for rich mercs and self-important executives, this katana can indeed cut through almost anything and it is undeniably impressive. Nevermind the heavy battery and potential accidental self-mutilation – think of the pose you can strike as your enemies enter a dark, smoky room and you light this baby up, only its edge glowing in the dark. It's even color customizable.

POWER TAGS

LASER-EDGED KATANA

- *CUT THROUGH ALMOST ANYTHING*
- *DEFLECT ENERGY*
- *INSTANT DISMEMBERMENT*
- *CUT THROUGH A BARRIER*
- *FIRE A SHEET OF LASER*
- *AR WEAK POINT SCANNER*
- *SWORD-FIGHTING TRAINING*
- *PRIVATE WEAPONSMITH*
- *REFLECTIVE OVERALLS*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *CUMBERSOME BATTERY*
- *EASY TO SELF-HARM*
- *OBSESSED WITH THE SWORD*
- *REFLECTIVE DEFENSES*

ITCH

Cut everything.

SPECIAL

Flashpoint: Your sword can cut through armor and shielding more effectively. Once per session, when you attack an armored opponent and roll 10+, you may burn one armor or shielding tag they possess without spending Power. If you do so, increase your Power by 1 before spending it.

SUNDOG SUIT

CUTTING EDGE NOISE

Taiyō SolarTech provides a large percentage of the energy needs of the entire Megacity and you have the honor of belonging to one of their elite units, the Sundogs. Both fighters and technicians, the Sundogs address threats to the power grid face on and use energy weapons powered by a battery on their reflective suits. When the situation is dire, they can call down a devastating beam of power from the Sky Sword satellite.

The MC has more information about Taiyō SolarTech on page 201.

POWER TAGS

SUNDOG SUIT

- *LASER RIFLE*
- *POWERFUL BATTERY*
- *HEAT AND ENERGY PROTECTION*
- *ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING*
- *CALL DOWN A FOCUSED SUNLIGHT BLAST*
- *TAIYŌ SOLARTECH SUPPLY OFFICER*
- *DURABLE MATERIALS*
- *ABSORB SOLAR POWER*
- *BALLISTIC INSERTS*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *CUMBERSOME BATTERY*
- *DIFFICULT TO COOL OFF*
- *DANGEROUS VOLTAGE*
- *DESTRUCTIVE BLAST*

ITCH

Supply more power to the grid.

SPECIAL

Overload: You know how to squeeze every last drop out of your equipment. Whenever you burn an equipment tag from this theme for Power, you may add 4 Power instead of 3. After the roll, your suit and related gear get *burnout-1*.

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SYNTHETIC BODY

CUTTING EDGE NOISE

Most, if not all of your body is made of smart plastics, molded bio-matter, or other ultra-advanced material – a miracle possible thanks to the state-of-the-art level of robotics design and integration in the Tokyo Megacity. Not only are you essentially indestructible and require almost no sustenance, you can also replace your arms with tools and attach new devices to yourself.

POWER TAGS

SYNTHETIC BODY

- ENDURE HARM
- POWER OTHER DEVICES
- HIDDEN WEAPON HOLSTERS
- SELF-REPAIR KIT
- DETACH LIMBS
- PRECISE MEDICAL MEASUREMENTS
- ROBOTICS ENGINEERING
- EXCLUSIVE CYBERNETICS LAB ACCESS
- TOOL ATTACHMENTS

WEAKNESS TAGS

- LOW BATTERY
- SCAVENGERS AND RIVAL ROBOTICISTS
- STUTTERING CONTROL
- DISCONNECTED FROM THE SPIRITUAL

ITCH

Become completely self-reliant.

SPECIAL

Replaceable Parts: At the end of every downtime, you may gain a story tag representing a new modification or attachment you've installed. You may only have one such story tag at a time – if you create a new one, any existing story tag from this Special expires.

TAMATEBAKO PLUGGER

CYBERSPACE NOISE

A tinkerer-hacker of sorts, you excel at mounting formidable cyberspace attacks not by writing ingenious code, but by plugging into your console ready-made hacking solutions called tamatebako: dongles, memory cards, and extensions that pack both pre-made software and the required hardware acceleration to support it. These flickering devices give you a computational edge over traditional hackers in most straight-forward jobs, while making you vulnerable to non-standard, rapidly-changing, or unexpected situations. Can't win them all, so it's lucky you also have a box for safe disconnection.

POWER TAGS

TAMATEBAKO PLUGGER

- LARGE COLLECTION OF TAMATEBAKO
- CUSTOMIZE CONSOLE TO JOB
- DEDICATED HARDWARE ACCELERATION
- "DRILLER" FIREWALL BREAKER BOX
- "RHINO" REINFORCED AVATAR BOX
- "SP33DREAD" FAST SEARCH BOX
- "MIRRORBALL" AVATAR CLONING BOX
- "MASX FX" SPOOFING BOX
- OVERWHELM OPPONENT

WEAKNESS TAGS

- TANGLE OF WIRES AND BOXES
- HARDWIRED AND INFLEXIBLE
- UNPREPARED FOR THIS
- FAST-ADAPTING DIGITAL ENTITIES

ITCH

Find the right tamatebako for every challenge.

SPECIAL

Does What Is Says On The Tin: Once per scene, when you invoke a specific tamatebako tag to do what it was designed to do, you can treat a miss (6-) for a mixed hit (7-9), or a mixed hit (7-9) for a strong hit (10-).

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MEGACITY SPECIALS

PLAYER CHARACTER SPECIALS

Megacity Specials are Specials specific to Tokyo. Instead of specializations for one of your existing themes, Megacity Specials allow you to connect your character directly to elements in the Tokyo Megacity through your PC's in-game experiences, gaining an advantage from their adventures in Tokyo 20XX without dedicating an entire theme to represent that aspect.

You can choose from these Specials instead of any other upgrade when you fill the upgrade track in any of your four main themes (excluding loadout and crew themes). To be able to pick a Megacity Special, you must first fulfill the conditions specified in its description.

Record these Specials on your character card instead of on the theme card. Note that since these Specials do not belong to a theme, they cannot be lost by replacing a theme. Instead, they are removed for narrative reasons: when the narrative conditions that made them possible aren't relevant any longer or when your character has outgrown this feature, you may remove them from your character card and mark an Evolution point.

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☐ **Cheap Prosthetic:** You've replaced a limb with a prosthetic that you can easily fix or replace. When mitigating Consequences that you can prevent by sacrificing this prosthetic – like blocking a sword strike or stepping in molten metal – you may have the limb take this status instead, giving it *damaged* or a similar Effect, which affects the use of your prosthetic until you repair it.

☐ **Favorite Gadget:** You've acquired a favorite consumer gadget, such as a console, tamatebako, or another similar piece of tech, and you've started using it for everything, including things it wasn't originally intended for. Choose a power tag representing this device. You may invoke this tag as directly relevant even when it is only indirectly relevant. Whenever you do, your item takes *wear-and-tear-1*, which hinders mitigating Consequences that represent malfunctions.

☐ **Friends in the Bureau:** You have performed a service to the Bureau of Onmyō or specific individuals in it. Once per job, you may ask for their help, gaining four appropriate story tags for the duration of the scene, such as *onmyōji inspector, Onmyōdō, yin-yang shield, binding ofuda*, or *kami-tracking drones*. If you use this to have the Bureau violate or overlook its own Mythic regulations, you also become *tagged-2* by the Bureau's Internal Affairs division.

☐ **Helpful Kami:** A helpful minor kami, such as a bake-danuki (mischievous tanuki yōkai) or a kaibyō ("strange cat"), has taken a fascination with your mundane aspects. Once a session, when you take action without invoking Mythic or Noise tags, you may treat a miss (6-) as a mixed hit (7-9), or a mixed hit (7-9) as a strong hit (10+), as they help you in your endeavor.

☐ **Gamer Fame:** You've become famous thanks to one of Tokyo's fastest-growing sports: AR gaming. Once per session, you can choose someone in the scene that has a chance to recognize you and give them *starstruck-2* (or *starstruck-1* to a Scale 1 crowd) which might help you impress, intimidate, distract, or otherwise influence them.

☐ **Grudge Against Yōkai:** You have been deeply harmed by a yōkai and now seek to eradicate them all as vengeance. Once per session, when facing yōkai, you may gain *vengeful* at any tier up to tier 3. Just before this status expires (usually at the end of the scene or when you cool off, whichever comes first), you take *tainted-2*, with *vengeful* hindering your mitigation.

☐ **Nanotech Residue:** You have been attacked and infected by nanotech, which regards your bloodstream as its territory and protects it ferociously. Whenever you take a status that represents organisms or materials ingested or injected into your body and affecting you from within or



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permeating your body, if this status is tier-2 or below, you instead avoid it (with no mitigation roll). This protects you from toxins, disease, particulates, some corrosives, other nanites, and any other kind of infection, but it also prevents you from gaining benefits from beneficial influences, like medicine or magical potions.

☐ **Proper Rituals:** You learned the proper ways to pay respect to the kami. Whenever you roll when attempting to influence a kami, ask them to bless or curse someone, or tend to their shrine or Thin Place, on a 10+, you may achieve a great success (and spend 1 additional Power, if the outcome is tracked) without generating Consequences. You may still suffer Consequences for other reasons, such as an unaddressed Threat.

☐ **Salaryman:** You have a regular job, which provides you with income and access to company resources. During downtime, you get *solvent-1* and 1 additional Power to spend exclusively on resources available through your position.

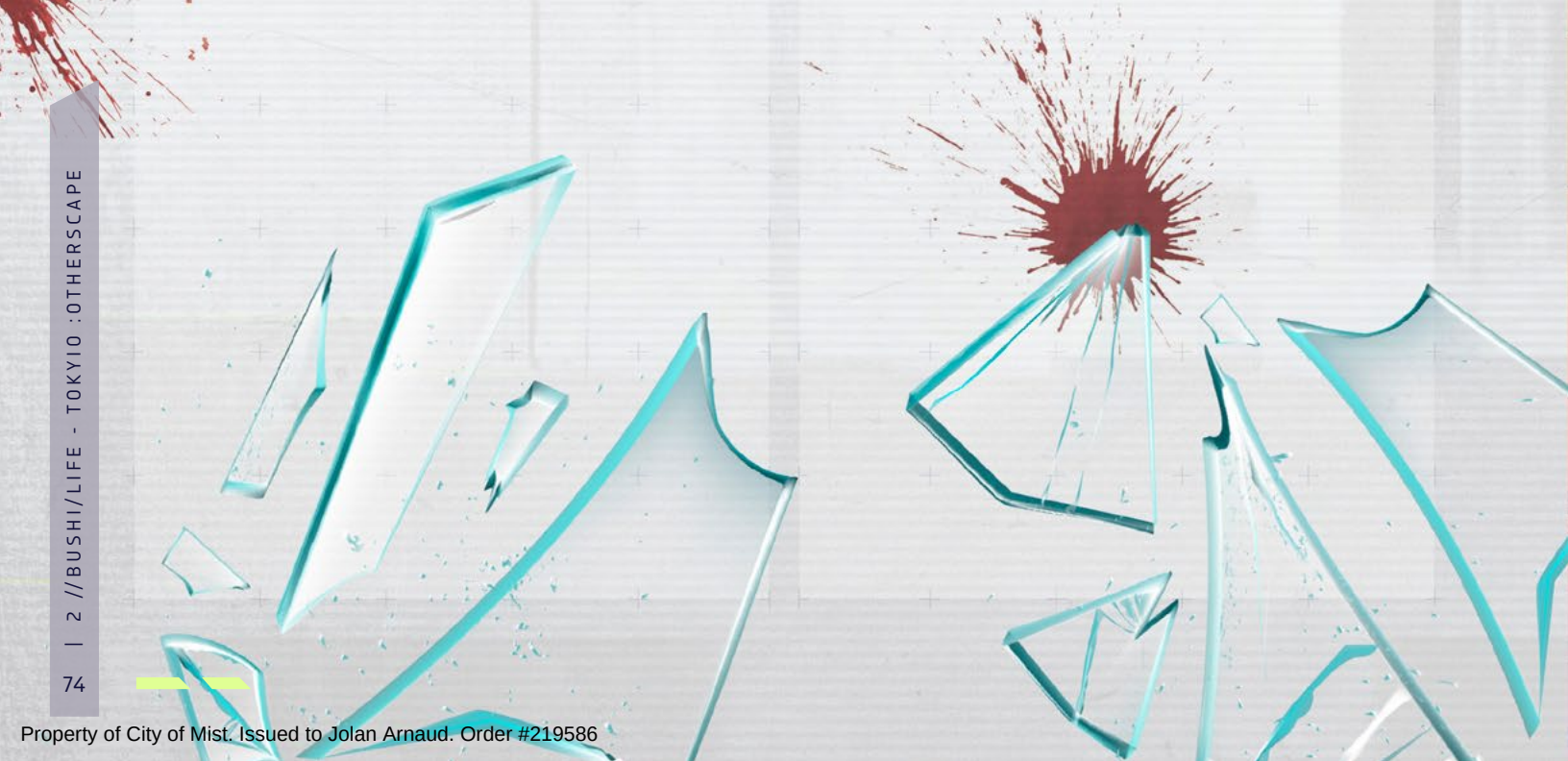
☐ **Sworn Rival:** An NPC has become your sworn rival, making both of you dedicated to bring about the downfall of the other. Whenever your rival is at the scene, you gain *consuming-competitiveness-2* which helps actions against your rival, hinders actions not directly focused on your rival, and does not affect mitigating Consequences from your rival.

☐ **Symbol of Power:** You have learned and extensively practiced a minor magical symbol, either a symbolic icon, a seal, or a phrase written in kanji. Choose a tier-2 status when you take this Special. Once per session, when you receive the spotlight, you may gain or give this status to someone in the scene, then act as normal.

☐ **Synthetic Liaison:** You have one of the latest models of personal robot assistants, often acquired by Tokyo's elite. At the end of every downtime, you may choose one person in Tokyo to whom your assistant has been making calls or visits on your behalf; you then gain *good-favor-2* with that person until the next downtime. The MC may overrule this with specific NPCs if they are unavailable or particularly averse to being contacted by your PC or assistant.

☐ **Tsukumogami:** A piece of equipment you own or found has become significant enough to awaken with its own kami or spirit. Choose a power tag representing an item; it becomes an autonomous Mythic being capable of acting on its own (secondary character) and you may converse with it and ask it questions about its field of expertise (e.g., construction for a hammer) and about the world of kami and yōkai (the Otherscape). Once per session, you may take action with this tsukumogami tag as an interjection (without receiving the spotlight).

☐ **Zen Against the Noise:** You have studied traditional Zen meditation techniques that help you stay focused in the most distracting situations. Once per scene, when you have a few moments to meditate, you may gain 2 Power which you may spend to give yourself *centered-2* or otherwise counteract any Effect of confusion, overstimulation, or overload that is the result of the Noise or any tech that spreads it. You may not stack beneficial statuses from this meditation above tier 2.



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CREW THEME SPECIALS

These crew theme Specials can be chosen as an upgrade for the crew theme. To be able to choose them, your crew must fulfill the conditions specified in the description.

☐ **Mercenary Supplicants:** Mercenaries without their own crew hold you in respect. As a result, they often come to you seeking employment and apprenticeship. During down-time, you may create a story tag representing a mercenary temporarily joining your crew. When you do, remove any story tags previously created by this Special.

☐ **Respected Buke:** Your crew has gained the respect of Tokyo's mercenary world due to your proven success record and professional conduct. Once per session, when one of you is dealing non-violently with someone who is aware of this respect, you may treat a miss (6-) as a mixed hit (7-9) or a mixed hit (7-9) as a strong hit (10+).

☐ **Pillars of the Community:** Your crew has come to be regarded as the protectors of a certain community in Tokyo, who rely on you for their safety. You're constantly updated with the latest information about the community and its situation. Each crew member may take the status *devoted-to-community-2* once per session, boosting actions to serve or protect the community.

☐ **Shugo:** Your crew has come under the attention of a high level 'fixer' with quality connections in Tokyo's government, criminal, and corporate worlds. Whenever you are offered a job (whether through this contact or not), you may ask them one question about an involved person, item, or location. The MC will provide a solid lead or a specific warning related to the subject you chose.



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LOADOUT: TOKYO STREET CATALOG

The Tokyo Megacity is a bustling and diverse marketplace. Alongside internationally available commodities, Tokyo merchants deal in a dazzling variety of locally-sourced goods. Tokyo's technology markets' most sought-after products include custom hardware and weaponry, advanced robotics, and prohibited nanotech.

Since the return of the kami, and thanks to its richness in Sources, the Megacity is also a thriving black market of stolen Relics, Esoterica manuscripts, ingredients, and implements for the various Japanese occult arts, and even legendary Familiars.

At the discretion of the MC, the following catalog items may be generally available to bushi (mercs) living or visiting the Tokyo Megacity. Other items might only become available after the crew has proven themselves worthy, or after they've gained access to illicit shopping places such as the **Ghost Market** (page 159); see the Loot Catalogs at the end of **Chapter 3: Yōkai Database** and throughout **Chapter 4: Key Players**.



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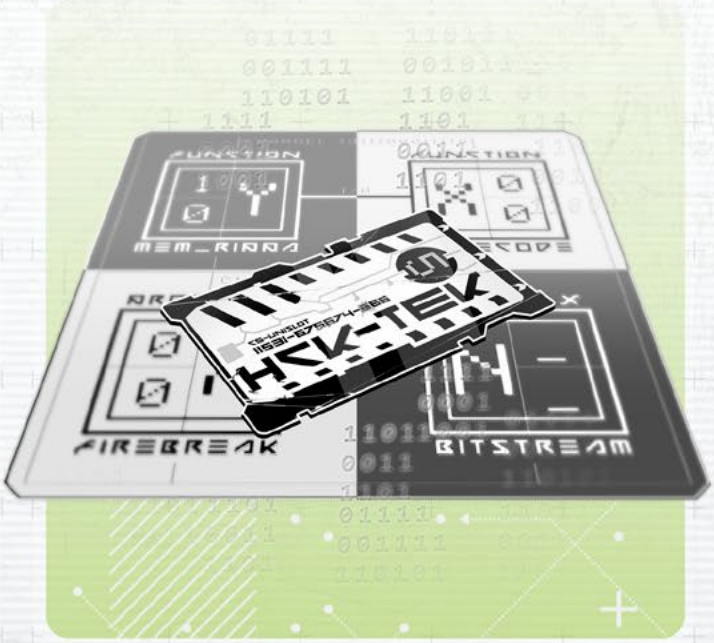
ACCESS & PERKS

GENERAL ITEMS

Items: *coffin bed*, *Hōseki Row high-end VR home*, *leaked copy of Mt. Hōrai's next hit*, *public transport priority*, *shrine dedicated to [kami/goryō/dragon]*, *Sōma Medical life support*

Features: *tutelary kami*, *unlisted*

Flaws: *rent is due*, *subscription fees*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Ghost Market access chit	This wooden disk is just a few centimeters in diameter. It bears color-coded holographic dots, a keycode that provides access to the legendary Ghost Market on a specific night.	***Ghost Market access chit***, *air of legitimacy, underworld prestige, insignificant to those not in the know*	*illegal*
Mt. Hōrai Game Pass	This subscription for hardcore gamers grants access to Mt. Hōrai's endless offering of games and VR universes, and equips the pro gamer with a high-priority datalink. An illegal version also allows real system shock when hit in-game, upping the stakes.	***Mt. Hōrai Game Pass***, *latency protection, bring a guest, bio-feedback option*	*rival gamers*
Oni favor	It's good to have friends in low places, and being owed a favor from a demon is about as low as it gets. Seeing as they're duplicitous brutes, however, it's only a matter of time before the oni decides to turn on you.	***favor from an oni***, *oni bodyguard, sow chaos, terrifying*	*treacherous*
Onmyōji favor	The Bureau of Onmyō can be a cause of frustration, but being owed a favor by them is no small thing and can come in handy when dealing with the dark side of Mythic Tokyo.	***Onmyōji favor***, *open investigation, yōkai removal services, backed by the authorities*	*snitch*
Solo timeshare workshop	Tokyo is rife with compact manufacturing spaces where members can access 3D printers, rapid prototyping software, and engineering databases, and equally importantly, where they can work on their projects in peace.	***solo timeshare workshop,*** *printable item databases, experienced community, uninterrupted work*	*only room for one*

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AMMO

GENERAL ITEMS

Items: *armor-melting nanite ammo*, *circuit-frying ammo*, *fortune-blessed bullet*, *ghost-destroying blessed bullets*, *malware-uploading rounds*, *yang-empowered healing bullets*, *yin-empowered life-draining bullets*, *yōkai-seeking arrows*

Flaws: *blessing lasts until sunrise*, *causes spiritual corruption*, *glows in the dark*, *highly illegal*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Five Rings Burrowing Bullets	These vicious bullets hit with blunt force trauma and then activate to grind deeper into their target for more tissue damage.	***burrowing bullets***, *blunt force trauma, deep tissue damage*	*doesn't pierce armor*
Grim Pagoda Drone Jammers	The counterculture collective Grim Pagoda distributes these sophisticated ammo rounds. They deal very little damage, but broadcast a powerful radio burst designed to disrupt drone systems.	***drone jammer rounds***, *disrupt programmed directives, overcomes anti-jam hardware, marks the target*	*barely any physical damage*
Kyūdō Arms Corrective Ammunition	The onboard AI in these rounds actively adjust balance to assist long range shots, which makes them especially valuable during one of Tokyo's many storms.	***corrective ammunition***, *compensate for winds, compensate for magnetic fields, trick shots*	*conflict with other smart gun apps*
Nakashima Explosive Arrowheads	These arrowheads are packed with flammable chemicals that ignite on contact and release a fiery blast.	***incendiary arrowheads***, *wide-area blast, ignite combustibles, creates smoke and flames*	*high humidity*
Nakashima Resonance Arrows	Bringing a modern twist to archery, these arrows carry a harmonic resonator that activates on release to create an envelope of air that allows for trick banking shots and a surprisingly hard punch.	***resonance arrows***, *trick banking shot, fly through water, powerful punch*	*doesn't pierce armor*



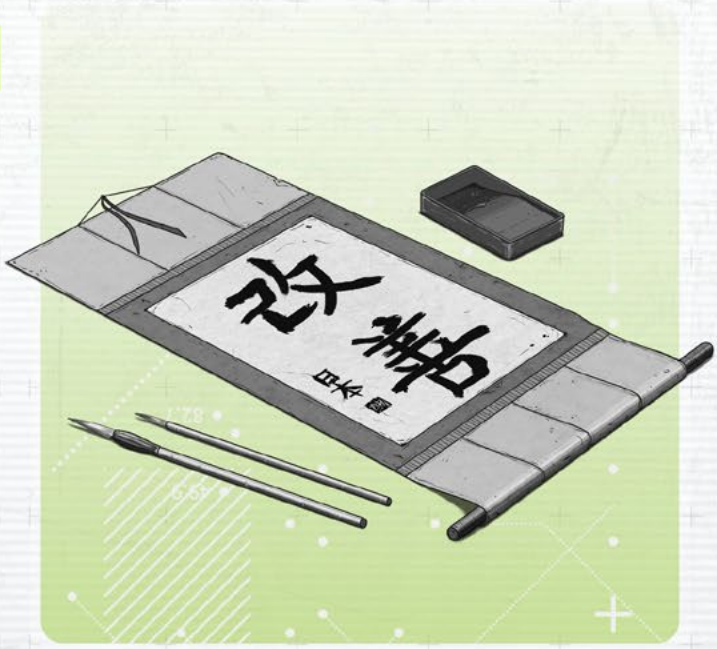


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APPS, CHIPS, & DATABASES

In Tokyo, hardware devices known as tamatebako (see **A Hardware Solution to Every Problem**, page 15) are just as common as chips, even though the former are bulkier. The rarer and more costly the chip, the more likely it is to be sold as a tamatebako – both because tamatebako are seen as status symbols and because they pack dedicated hardware to optimize the performance of a chip without draining the main system's resources (excluding power). Most tamatebako take the form of electronics boxes, ranging in size from dongles to devices the size of jewelry boxes.

A tamatebako is plugged into a console, a device, or cybertech to give it additional functionality. It often has its own input port, enabling the chaining of several such devices.



GENERAL TAGS

Items: *AI paramour projection box*, *local network scanning tamatebako*, *plug-in firewall box*, *Ryōgen University programing assistant*, *Shorinji Kempo reflex chip*, *tour guide to [prefecture]*, *universal device adapter box*

Features: *built-in encryption*, *dedicated hardware acceleration*, *signal shielding*

Flaws: *annoyingly cute sound effects*, *flashing lights*, *overheats*, *power drain*, *tangle of cables*

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Artisan Life: Calligraphy Tamatebako	Part of a line of art-focused tamatebako, this one grants a skill in calligraphy which can prove helpful in Mythos rituals and crafting prayers to the kami.	***calligraphy skill tamatebako***, *built-in style enhancer, best on washi paper, artistic talent*	*hyper focused on task*
Busshin-shū Electronics Sensorium Recorder	A must-have for Japan's digital influencer crowd, this tamatebako connects to most neural implant brands to broadcast, record, or replay a user's sensory and emotional experience.	***sensorium recorder***, *rouse the same emotions, recall the same events, personal bio-monitor*	*can't tell recording from reality*
Gordian Mythos Wiki tamatebako	A wiki of kami and yōkai, constantly updated by the famed hacker group, accessible through a tamatebako. Edit permissions are limited to prevent everyone and their superstitious aunts from inserting falsehoods, but that only holds to a point.	***Japanese mythos wiki***, *kami and yōkai guide, "How to draw anti-yōkai talismans", "Kami Binding 101"*	*incorrect details*
Kojima Security Tech C5 "Puppetmaster" Spatial Awareness Chip	Having even two drones in the air at once can get overwhelming, but with this snap-in chip you become keenly aware of the space around you and your drones' positions.	***puppetmaster chip***, *manage several drones, spatial imaging, multitasking*	*losing sense of self*
Kojima Security Tech X5 "Network Feed" HUD Facial Identification System	Tapping into public Tokyo databases, this program identifies the faces of everyone in the user's field of view. It's popular with security offices and sales departments.	***facial identification system***, *access public personal profiles, threat alarm, expression analyzer*	*obscured faces*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Lotus Meditative Experience for Mental Healing	This database provides countless meditative techniques, sleep assistance, chill VR environments, digital wellbeing telemetry, and rudimentary therapist AI to help achieve rapid mental health improvements.	***lotus meditative healing program***, *enter trance*, *regain inner calm*, *relaxing VR space*	*long term commitment*
Neophyte Industries Judo Basics Skill Chip	This neural chip holds muscle memory that enables the user to perform basic judo moves even without having further cybernetic enhancements.	***judo skill chip***, *use their strength* ***against them***, *throw technique*, *breakfall technique*	*overreaching*
Religious ceremony database	An interactive, intuitive database of religious practices, this program helps the user navigate complex rites – especially purification and communion ceremonies.	***ceremony database***, *purification and communion*, *identify places of worship*, *appeasement rites*	*Noise pollution*

ARMOR

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *Nano-butai biohazard suit*, *police riot armor*, *yōkai-sensing samurai helmet*

Features: *anti-nanotech filter*, *robotic strength enhancement*, *shinobi smoke bomb ejector*

Flaws: *bulky*, *crumbling antique*, *hard to doff*, *too strong for own good*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Deung Sealed Hot Zone Armored Suit	This sealed suit provides excellent protection against radioactive environmental hazards as well as enemy action.	***hot zone armored suit***, *sealed environment*, *decontamination spray*, *hazard scanner*	*cumbersome*
Hayashi Group "Mercury" Adaptive Armor	This hi-tech armor is able to measure and assess impacts, then reshape its smart material to compensate. Can be purchased in a torso-only or full body version.	***adaptive armor***, *adjust to previous attack type*, *full-body coverage*, *adaptive camouflage upgrade*	*battery running low*
Kojima Security Tech N43 Mechanoid Battlesuit	This mini-mech is a fully enclosed one-person tank, with servo-enhanced strength and built-in hard points for weapons.	***mechanoid battlesuit***, *servo-enhanced strength*, *inch-thick shielding*, *custom weapon array*	*slow moving*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Sasaki K-CH0 "Gusoku" Articulated Armor	In its retracted mode, this armor-laden pack fits on the back and can be covered with a bulky coat. When the user activates it, armor plates unfold in segments to cover the user from the shoulders down, in a manner resembling a samurai's gusoku armor.	***articulated armor***, *quick don, hidden in retracted mode, high impact absorption*	*heavy*
Sasaki SP-51 "Spider Crab" Marine Armor	Hard-shelled, but allowing for great mobility, the design of this armor is inspired by the long-limbed Japanese crabs right down to the long, segmented arms mounted on the back.	***spider crab marine armor***, *underwater mobility, extra arms, intimidating silhouette*	*cumbersome on land*
Shōrai A80 Flexible Performance Personal Armor	Made of lightweight carbon fiber materials and rigid metal mesh, this isn't quite like wearing bulletproof clothing, but it's remarkably close.	***armored outfit***, *distribute kinetic impact, lightweight, inconspicuous*	*restricts agile movements*
Ueda Artisan Arms Demon Armor	This body armor resembles traditional samurai armor styled with a demonic motif, and indeed it was made by demonic hands and still carries some taint and power.	***demon-tainted armor***, *stops blades, magic-negating aura, enflame weapon with hellfire*	*bouts of bloodlust*

BODY ATTACHMENTS & CYBERNETICS

Ishoku-nano is a type of Japanese body decoration that is also gaining popularity in the rest of the world. Drawing its name from the ishoku-hada ("remarkable skin") style of cosplay bodypaint, these pigments are usually applied in whorls and designs, or even in kabuki-style kumadori makeup. Despite the name, there are no nanobots in a vial of ishoku-nano, which contains instead one of the more common developments in the aftermath of the nanotech ban: engineered microbes. They activate by contact with human skin, and remain effective for several days.

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *[ability]-enhancing ishoku-nano paint*, *lifelike cosplay prehensile tail*, *mnemonic courier implant*, *[power]-granting yōkai-DNA injection*, *reflex-boosting neck-mounted jellyfish*, *shoulder-mounted AI holoprojector*



Features: *demon-powered*,*elegantly ceramic*, *kawaii cute*, *many interface sockets*, *modular*, *redundant robotics*, *ritually-purified*, *self-repairing*,

Flaws: *attracts ghosts*, *mind of its own*, *removed by water*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Chrysanthemum Biosciences Amphibious Implant Suite	A series of short-term implants that allow limited waterbreathing, provide swim webbing, and insulate the body for prolonged cold.	***amphibious implant suite***, *faster swimming, cold resistance, rudimentary sonar*	*toxins degrade the implant*
Ghost Drone Ishoku-Nano Paint	Available through a lone vendor who frequents the Ghost Market, this ishoku-nano paint enables a user who paints Zen patterns on themselves to have some of their spirit enter a drone that is painted with the same patterns.	***ghost drone ishoku-nano***, *linked sensory experience, improved reaction control, sense things unseen by sensors*	*detached from your body*
Hikage Pharmaceuticals Enchanting Ishoku-Nano Paint	The microbes in this ishoku-nano feed on the person's natural sweat and produce pheromones keyed to them specifically.	***enchanting ishoku-nano***, *alluring presence, pleasant smell, impressionable targets*	*air filters*
Shimada Group BRT-Prime Toolkit Hand	This flexible framework fits over the user's hand and connects to the nerves to create a responsive tool that adjusts to several dozen different tool functions.	***toolkit hand***, *instant tool change, tool database, surprisingly sturdy*	*snag on something*
Suburashī Very! Armored Skin Ishoku-Nano Paint	A recent accidental breakthrough by the body aesthetic company Suburashī Very!, currently sold solely to the black market through illicit channels. This ishoku-nano paint forms a hardened shell over the user once it is set, and it's the reason many street mercenaries show up to a fight with full face paint.	***ishoku-nano armored skin paint***, *electrical resistance, soften a fall, self-repair*	*stiff movements*
Suburashī Very! Kemonomimi Cosplay Ishoku-Nano Paint	This ishoku-nano paint is produced through a secret Source-related technique. It rapidly alters the user's physiology where applied, to create animal-like modifications such as fur and tails, depending on the brand.	***ishoku-nano kemonomimi paint***, *instant furry, [brand-dependent bestial trait], animal cuteness*	*itchy skin*
Suburashī Very! Sense-Heightening Ishoku-Nano Paint	These ishoku-nano paints greatly increase the sensitivity of the user's senses, especially when painted on the head.	***ishoku-nano sense-heightening paint***, *heightened smell, heightened hearing, electromagnetic sensitivity*	*light-induced headaches*

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CYBERSPACE

GENERAL TAGS

Software: *hardware hijacker app*, *manufacturer setting editor*

VR Models: *brute force kanabō*, *code katana*, *firewall samurai armor*, *giant robot suit*, *hulking oni avatar*, *latest official [idol] skin*, *shiro data fortress*, *water serpent avatar*

Features: *gamified*, *kami-blessed*, *tainted*

Flaws: *annoying default settings*, *attracts cyberspace yōkai*

Hardware: *hivemind server*, *kimono-integrated console*, *mask-integrated neural jack*

Features: *hanko seal locked*, *rare collectible*, *top-tier hardware*

Flaws: *coveted by others*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Busshin-shū Electronics Bracer Console "Shin'yū"	This console straps to your forearm, and thanks to its impressive computing power and clever software, can serve as a useful Harnessing console while remaining conveniently portable.	***portable bracer console***, *harnessing suite*, *processor boosting add-on*, *lightweight*	*gets too hot*
Chimpira traffic tracker tamatebako	These boxes, which allow one to track data sources in Nearspace, are often given by a shugo to their chimpira (see Honor Among Mercs, page 16) as a welcome gift and a calling card, marked with the shugo's symbol. It's a reminder to keep on your guard: even when there's no one in sight, you're rarely alone.	***data traffic tracker tamatebako***, *identify signal sources*, *log history*, *disguised as other device*	*limited range*
"Ghost" silent running protocol	Supposedly containing the spirit of a dead shinobi, this app obscures digital footprints by preventing any log from mentioning you, making you invisible to servers.	***silent running protocol***, *avoid logs*, *invisible movement*, *nothing to see here*	*leaves strange blanks*
Ishii-Harada Gen-32 "Visionary" VR Console	Generally acknowledged to be the leading console design for virtual reality world building, the Japanese hacker community goes wild with each new model.	***VR design console***, *powerful world-building tools*, *Harnessing accelerator*, *asset library*	*all the hackers know the software*
Kaiju Collective Drone Hijacking Freeware	The infamous Kaiju Collective of cyber-anarchists has distributed this program widely to help Tokyo residents take control of unwanted drones.	***drone hijacking freeware***, *control hostile drone*, *block recovery attempts*, *cyber-anarchist support*	*hidden malware*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Ōkami Sunshine "Toy Soldiers" Series-T	Ōkami Sunshine is a VR construct supplier known for their weird aesthetics. The Toy Soldier series allows the user to summon digital constructs of military units complete with tactical skills, while appearing as, yes, painted wooden toys, carrying nobori (banners).	***toy soldier digital constructs***, *tactical maneuvers, create a dozen at a time, create cover*	*must act as a group*
Ryūjin Guardian AI	This popular program monitors your connection. When it detects any attempts to hack your feed it comes down on the intruder like a snapping dragon.	***ryūjin guardian AI***, *monitor connection, attack intruder with a bite, monstrous AI avatar*	*distracted by too much Noise*

DRONES

The Tokyo underworld market tends to prefer small, automated drones, used mostly to inform and spy. Personal honor and demonstrating one's skill are core values of the Tokyo merc world, and so it's generally agreed that if something needs to be done, it should be done in person. On the flipside, the Tokyo Megacity's widespread acceptance of robots, androids, and synths as individuals means your android assistant is considered their own person, acting under your orders and responsibility.



GENERAL TAGS

Items: *android personal driver*, *cyberbug*, *flying selfie camera*, *industrial robot*, *kawaii robo-pet*, *maid droid*, *precision flying grappling hook*, *realistic animal replica*

Features: *cheerful personality*, *collector's item*, *defensive combat mode*, *hijack-resistant firewall*, *preprogrammed attacks*

Flaws: *always on*, *inappropriately affectionate*, *loud automated ads*, *overly curious*, *shares personal information*, *thinks it's at a construction site*, *too small to repair*

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
"Concubine" Anthroform Companion Bot	Lonely souls, or those who simply prefer the company of robots, can rent out or buy one of these humanlike companion synths to fulfill their social, physical, and/or emotional needs, available in a staggering variety of looks, personalities, makes, and features.	***anthroform companion bot***, *lifts my spirit, stress relief, evoke envy*	*emergent personality*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Five Rings "Defender" Bodyguard Robot	A hefty and heavily-armored metal gearbox, this robot is surprisingly fast and deadly. Its primary directive is to protect its paired owner, but the owner can also set offensive objectives or assign a new protectee when necessary.	***armored bodyguard robot**, heavy plating, fast and deadly, high-speed minigun*	*sticks out*
Goburin Street Labs Obake-5 Vehicle Hijacker	This infamous crawling unit can make anything into a drone. It works its way over to a vehicle, physically connects to the system, then allows you to remotely control your new hijacked toy.	***vehicle hijacker**, long distance hacking, magnetic legs, override controls*	*signal interference*
Ishii-Harada "Bakemono" Anthroform Decoy Droid	Designed to stand in for top-tier executives in volatile negotiations, this droid has not only the exact semblance of a specific individual, but also their voice, mannerism, retinal patterns, and a subdermal layer of their blood for DNA testing, making it indistinguishable from the original.	***anthroform decoy droid**, pass ID tests, self-destruct bomb, hacking protection*	*hard to prove its not me*
Ishii-Harada Clandestine Hidden Drone Dock	This dock, the size of a flat handheld device, contains a small drone or a set of tiny drones. It can be attached to almost anything, including your own skin. Its stealth casing shields it from most scanners and sensors.	***hidden drone dock**, minified tech, stealth casing, charging unit*	*limited drone range*
Ishii-Harada Investigative Microdrone Swarm	Many private investigative firms employ these collectives of one hundred microdrones that spread out to look for minute clues and evidence.	***investigative microdrone swarm**, large area search, thorough search, microscopic clues*	*small fragile units*
Kojima Security Tech S16 Anti-Drone Attack Drone	The standard in ADAD technologies, the Kojima S16 has been the foil of countless flying units. They might be able to take down only an enemy or two before being destroyed, but that's usually enough.	***anti-drone drone**, fast and maneuverable, common models weaknesses, merciless automated assault*	*weak defenses*
Maeda-Yamada-Abe "Corvid Eye" Sentry Drone	Once this small, maneuverable drone attains an advantageous position, it activates its camouflage and silently watches an area for several days.	***silent sentry drone**, highly maneuverable, persistent holographic camouflage, small profile*	*blocked view*
Sōma Medical "Leapfrog" Medbot	The size of a small dog, but shaped more like a toad, this agile medical robot accompanies a battle unit and dispenses medical aid when and where it is needed, easily navigating the battlefield with powerful, jet-aided leaps.	***frog-like medical bot**, hard-to-reach patients, battlefield patch work, syringe gun*	*faulty prioritization algorithm*

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ENHANCERS

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *extremely calming tea*, *liquid meal pouch*, *oni blood*, *Zen-state inducer*

Features: *composed demeanor*, *currently fashionable*, *flow state*, *improved cybernetic interfacing*, *oozing charm*, *sharpened senses*

Flaws: *demonic hallucinations*, *lengthy imbibing ritual*, *loss of time*, *must meditate to activate*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Deung Antitoxin Bloodstream Filters	Used by workers in dangerously polluted areas, these blood-cleaning microbes are also used by Yakuza bosses fearing poisoning.	***antitoxin bloodstream filters***, *rare toxin cleansing, pollutant detection, long lasting*	*excessive sweating*
Hayashi Group "Helium" Pilot Reflex Enhancements	These artificial neurotransmitters heighten the host's reaction time and visual acuity. They are popular among high-velocity pilots like Kumo crawler pilots.	***pilot reflex enhancements***, *great visual acuity, fear suppression, boosted motor accuracy*	*post-use anxiety*
Ishii-Harada Robotics Power Optimizing Gel	This semi-conductive and charge-releasing gel can be rubbed on cyberware, drones, and robots to restore power, enhance their power consumption, cool down circuitry, and accelerate functions. It quickly magnetizes to power lines and circuitry and filtrates into the device.	***robotics power optimizing gel***, *cool down overheated devices, burst of speed, restore power*	*burns out quickly*
Kawaii Trippy Livestream Eye Patches	Slap these cute stickers on your eyelids and you'll be transported into someone else's life thanks to a combination of neural emitters and amphetamines. The live experience is usually broadcast to you while the streamer is engaging in some thrilling or even life-endangering activity.	***livestream eye patches***, *invigorating, intimate view of their life, fandom cred*	*cannot unsee this*
Sōma Medical Pain-Numbing Chewables	Manufactured as a medical supply, these powerful painkiller gummies have become a favorite among the street gangs of Tokyo as a means to keep fighting, even if you're walking on two bloody stumps.	***pain-numbing chewables***, *pairs well with adrenaline , keep taking more of them, good at numbing injuries*	*pay for it later*

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GARMENTS & FASHION

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *animated irezumi tattoo*, *bōsōzoku motorcycle jumpsuit*, *business suit*, *chonmage samurai hairstyle*, *cosplay outfit*, *kimono*, *mascot costume*, *matsuri festival attire*, *school uniform*

Features: *allows freedom of movement*, *bespoke tailored*, *canonically accurate to fandom*, *full AR integration*, *robotic tool arms*, *signal blocking Faraday-weave*, *spirit-warding Onmyōdō sigils*

Flaws: *assumed to be a teenager*, *cheap knockoff*, *overly formal*, *unflattering*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
AR-enhanced clubwear	This attire, common among cosplayers, is laced with wiring to provide a dramatic effect in AR, usually either combining with the design in harmony or deliberately clashing.	***AR-enhanced clubwear***, *dramatic entrance*, *dating app integration*, *a lasting impression*	*easily tracked*
Deung Articulated Sealing Jacket	Designed to look like a fashionable leather jacket, this garment unfolds with a hood, gloves, and pants to provide a sealed environment lasting up to one hour.	***articulated sealing jacket***, *oxygen backpack*, *stylish synthetic leather*	*limited view when deployed*
Ishii-Harada Cyberware Shielding Peripheral	An electronic shielding device that is sewn into clothing, this emitter lets you surreptitiously protect your cybertech and personal devices from interference.	***cyberware shielding peripheral***, *surge protection*, *blocks cyberware scanners too*, *hidden in clothing*	*blocks cyberspace connection*
Shōrai KM320 “Geisha” Kimono Cover	These beautiful kimono robes have many hidden inner pockets in various places, some of which contain small weapons such as shurikens.	***kimono cover***, *hidden pockets*, *pull out a small bladed weapon*, *luxurious*	*stumble over folds*
Shōrai NJ320 “Reikon” Stealth Jacket	These fashionable long coats are available in a variety of styles, but all feature a concealed hood and holographic camouflage technology to render the user practically invisible.	***stealth jacket***, *even better standing still*, *counter-targeting blur mode*, *fashionable*	*detectable when moving*

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MERC GEAR



GENERAL TAGS

Items: *motorcycle messenger bag*, *nanite filter mask*, *weather forecast wristwatch*

Features: *business appropriate*, *pop culture motif*, *shielded against internal scans*, *surprise popout weapons*, *weatherproof*

Flaws: *glitchy interface*, *offensive to the shugo*

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Astra-10 Adaptive Hanko Seal	As an alternative to their Autocracker (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 265), Astra-10 offers a keycard that can be adjusted on the fly to provide access through any digital lock.	***adaptive Hanko seal***, *on-the-fly access card, digital lock decoder, looks mundane*	*might require repeated attempts*
Chrysanthemum Biosciences DNA Privacy Scrubber	With biological sampling easier than ever, many worry about their genetic privacy. This complex matrix of enzymes will scour a space to remove every skin flake of any human. The cleaning is almost too thorough.	***DNA privacy scrubber***, *not a lot to clean, innocuous applicator, analyze DNA evidence*	*"Obviously they used a scrubber"*
Hayashi Group "Copper" Command Visor	These visors, commonly in use by the Nano-butai, allow for instant communication and quick planning between all linked members.	***command visor***, *track unit members, quick planning, effective teamwork*	*distracting banter*
Shever Direct Download Kunai	This long, spike-shaped device is designed to jam into a data port on any machine. It typically destroys the port, but the adaptive tech on the end can hack into the system and begin downloading data.	***direct download spike***, *upload a virus, also a blade, quick and brutal*	*limited storage*
Shōrai J700 Directed Thrust Jetpack	Shōrai was the first company to create a reliable, safe jetpack for flying through urban space and their latest J700 remains the most popular in Japan.	***directed thrust jetpack***, *controlled flight, autopilot, defensive maneuvers*	*power lines*
Sōma Medical Necrotic Tissue Rebuilder Pack	The gold standard in battlefield and disaster zone medical care, this pack contains eight high-octane enzyme and nutrient cocktail shots that accelerate the body's healing and can even revive dead tissue. This highly effective proprietary formula has been accused of containing nanites or mystical substances.	***necrotic tissue rebuilder pack***, *faster when sitting still, tackles severe damage, auto-dispenser*	*little tissue left to work with*

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SOURCE-TOUCHED ITEMS

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *akuma-repelling charm*, *Onmyōji book of elemental spells*, *ritual offerings*, *shikigami summoning ritual*

Features: *attracts [a specific type of yōkai]*, *painful to [a specific type of yōkai]*, *quick ritual*

Flaws: *lengthy ritual*, *must behave righteously*, *requires [a specific natural element or location]*, *tainted*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Ancient saihai	These rods with tassles on the end were once used by samurai who commanded troops. They still provide their holder with an aura of command.	***baton of rank***, *signals and commands, tactical coordination, large-scale command*	*must be clearly visible*
Anti-aging ningyo flesh	Consuming ningyo (merfolk) flesh is said to impart everlasting life, and since their return, Source hunters have scrambled to hunt them down. While not technically illegal, this barbaric commodity nevertheless delivers the promised benefits.	***anti-aging ningyo flesh***, *uncanny vitality, resist life force drain, simply cannot die*	*taboo practice*
Azusa yumi (Bow)	This type of sacred bow, usually made of cherry birch wood, is used in ceremonies of archery and music. It is said that the mere twanging of the string can frighten away ghosts.	***azusa yumi***, *bestow blessing on arrow, ghost-banishing sounds, used in ceremonies*	*delicate bowstring*
Benzaiten bullet time charm	These rare and original charms, blessed at the now-lost temple of goddess of all flowing things, allow the wearer to slow time, flowingly move out of harm's way, and even release a burst of pent-up kinetic power.	***bullet time charm***, *slow or stop time, flow around danger, kinetic energy amplifier*	*loses power quickly*
Daruma doll	This doll made of lacquered paper has two blank eyes. Painting in one when you set a goal gives you determination until you complete it and paint the other.	***daruma doll***, *determination, blessing of success on your goal, good luck charm*	*bad luck when sidetracked*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Kongō-sho (club)	This unusual weapon, similar to a double-sided mace, is seen in Buddhist legends as a tool in the hands of those who purify the world of evil threats.	***Kongō-sho**, evil-slaying weapon, indestructible, power of a thunderbolt*	*requires great strength to wield*
Remote prayer kifuda amulet	This wooden slate, with the name of a shrine or a particular kami written on it, is wrapped in an envelope for carrying. It's meant as a worship substitute, while away from the real shrine.	***remote prayer kifuda amulet**, channel shrine's kami, negotiations with kami, sense the remote shrine*	*Noise interference*
Spirit-trap irezumi	The irezumi (tattoos) common among Yakuza made tattoos into a taboo (see ishoku-nano, page 81, for a common alternative), pushing this art into the underworld, where some specialist artists developed the Esoteric practice of trapping spirits in ink for a limited time.	***spirit-trap irezumi**, summon the trapped spirit, command the spirit, protected by the spirit*	*commands opposed to spirit's nature*
Tainted sensu	This sensu (folding fan) is supercharged with strong feelings of injustice, betrayal, and vengeance. Any able mystic – or simply someone who feels the same – could use it to hide their true intentions as they scheme to get their revenge.	***tainted sensu**, hide intentions, distract others, surprising endgame*	*tainted*
Tsukumogami pack of matches	A century ago, a punk nightclub burned down in a fire that became legendary. All surviving packs of matches from the club have become tsukumogami, and it's said a single match is able to start a fire that could take down a building.	***tsukumogami pack of matches**, pyromaniac little guys, fire spreads quickly, the bigger they are the brighter they burn*	*target is not exciting enough*
Tsukumogami smith's tongs	Generations of blacksmiths have used these iron tongs in their work, imbuing them with a creative spirit of their own.	***tsukumogami smith's tongs**, clench anything, transform into a blacksmith, skilled work*	*will of its own*
Tsukumogami traffic control baton	This plastic glow-in-the-dark baton from the mid to late 20th century was used to control traffic and was then discarded or lost. Now it has awakened, and it can command traffic in all its forms.	***tsukumogami traffic control baton**, interface with the traffic grid, authoritative voice, control cyber traffic*	*law-abiding to a fault*
Tsukumogami wakizashi	An ancient short blade, this sword carries the duty and strength of a sworn samurai warrior.	***tsukumogami wakizashi**, edge that never dulls, moves with a samurai's strength, precious heirloom*	*dishonorable actions*

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VEHICLES

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *bōsōzoku motorcycle*, *delivery bicycle*, *empty car on a cargo train*, *flying motorcycle*, *industrial mech suit*

Features: *drone mode*, *enhanced safety measures*, *fold up into backpack*, *hardened against crashes*, *weave between pedestrians*

Flaws: *biodegradable*, *breaks in any crash*, *tagged as suspicious by police*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Gyeong Motors V-15z "Hayabusa" Motorcycle	Named for the peregrine falcon, these agile and quick bikes can make the sharp turns necessary to navigate so many of Tokyo's tight alleys.	***agile motorcycle***, *sharp turns, bike parkour, impress with stunts*	*wheel damage*
Hiyashi Motors R-71 Armored Bike	While the R-71 isn't the fastest motorcycle on the road, its sturdy design, hardpoints for weapons mounts, and extendable armor paneling make it a favorite among the oni biker gangs.	***armored bike***, *sturdy design, weapon hardpoints, modular*	*slow acceleration*
Hiyashi Motors "Guardian Angel" Personal Rotorcraft	Big enough for four passengers, the Guardian Angel design (licensed from NM3) is able to vertically take off and land in a narrow area. It is one of the safest, fastest, and most scenic transportation options used by those with means.	***Guardian Angel personal rotorcraft***, *VTOL flight, countless safety measures, impossible landing sites*	*very loud*
Tottori M6 "Katsuo" Personal Watercraft	A fast, jet-powered model, the Katsuo is easily modified and fits in most Tokyo canals and tunnels, making it a favorite off-the-grid transportation option among many mercenaries.	***personal watercraft***, *jet-powered, easily modified, low-profile*	*unstable*
Ulunjandi "Luna" Limited Edition Fusion	The Luna is one of the few flying car models available in Japan, ultra-prestigious with a silent quad-jet engine and an integrated AI chauffeur. It sees a lot of use by government officials.	***Luna flying car***, *AI piloted, micro-fusion core, luxurious features*	*registered with central server*

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WEAPONS

GENERAL TAGS

Items: *advanced materials [traditional weapon], remote controlled [traditional weapon], riot control hardening foam sprayer, tech scrambling grenades*

Features: *biometric user lock, electrified blade, family heirloom*

Flaws: *fragile and old, untested prototype*



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Acciaio Clandestine "Stiletto IIc" Rail Pistol	Building off the popularity of the revolutionary Shōrai railgun designs, Acciaio has begun marketing a pistol that shoots magnetically accelerated razor disks.	***razor disk rail pistol**, armor piercing, silent, cutting-edge*	*unexpected ricochet*
Elysian Blades Articulating Ōdachi Blade	This very long, two-handed sword collapses down into a (quite heavy) 30 cm baton, unfolding again with the flick of a button.	***articulating ōdachi blade**, downward slice, surprisingly heavy, concealable*	*slow attacks*
Five Rings "Deathrate" Compact Grenade Launcher	First developed for the Five Rings Paramilitary Company, this weapon dramatically escalated street conflicts in Tokyo. The compact launcher can be easily carried, but it holds an impressive magazine of grenades.	***compact grenade launcher**, extra-punch grenades, extra magazine, escalate the situation*	*magazine slow to replace*
Gorts & Jasper G-17 "Robo Killer" EMP Pistol	When enemy drones or robots are operating in your area, this compact pistol with an EMP pulse can make short work of them.	***EMP pistol**, localized electromagnetic pulse, scan for drone signals, arcs to nearby targets*	*short range*
Kikuchi Corp DL "Purge" Shoulder Cannon	This powerful mortar launcher is strapped to the shoulder and fitted with a recoil-absorbing arm with hands free controls. It's still a beast to operate.	***shoulder cannon**, uncontrolled explosions, recoil absorption, homing shells*	*collateral damage*
Kojima Security Tech ME1 Shock Gauntlets	Fitting over your hand like armor gauntlets, these charged weapons, which turn punches into electric bursts, were developed in-house for Kojima's Source-enhanced anti-drone fighters.	***shock gauntlets**, fry circuitry, one-two punch, launch an electrical arc*	*well-insulated targets*

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ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Modern Forge GFS Extreme Large Blade	Protagonists with massive swords are a staple of Japanese pop culture. Advances in manufacturing have allowed the creation of a real-life version.	***ñ extremely large blade***, *crushing momentum, gyroscopic balance, sweeping attacks*	*not concealable*
Modern Forge Tungsten-Alloy Katana	This high-end sword combines traditional forging techniques with modern manufacturing. It's a status symbol as much as an impressive weapon.	***tungsten-alloy katana***, *unbreakable parry, brutal slashing wounds, status symbol*	*scoffed at by traditionalists*
Nakashima Mk 2 Resonance Knife	Minute vibrations, almost imperceptible to the eye, grants the sharp blade of this knife an incredible cutting power.	***resonance knife***, *burrow through armor, force field piercing technique, concealable*	*requires focus to handle*
Shōrai Rail-1 Rail Sniper Rifle	This sniper rifle uses magnetic acceleration to fire tiny projectiles over a huge distance, in complete silence. It is highly sought after, and restricted, worldwide.	***rail sniper rifle***, *effective at distance, silent shots, powerful impact*	*slow fire rate*
Ueda Artisan Arms Electrified Naginata	The long blade of this traditional anti-cavalry weapon includes a charge back at the base that adds an electric shock with each hit. Corporate security use it to dismount biker gangs and keep rioters at bay.	***electrified naginata***, *mounted targets, long reach, ward off attackers*	*small spaces*
Ueda Artisan Arms Electronic Blackout Shuriken	Though they look like novelties, after these shuriken embed in a target or hard surface they release overwhelming EM interference.	***electronic blackout shuriken***, *fry the lights, smart path calibration, cyberware shutdown*	*limited range*
Ueda Artisan Arms Smoke Kunai	Based on a popular martial arts weapon, a kunai's leaf-shaped blades can be used as knives, jammed into walls for climbing, or thrown as a dagger – making the condensed lightweight smoke canister within them explode.	***smoke kunai bandolier***, *obscuring smoke, climbing spike, balanced for throwing*	*accidental trigger*



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CHAPTER 3

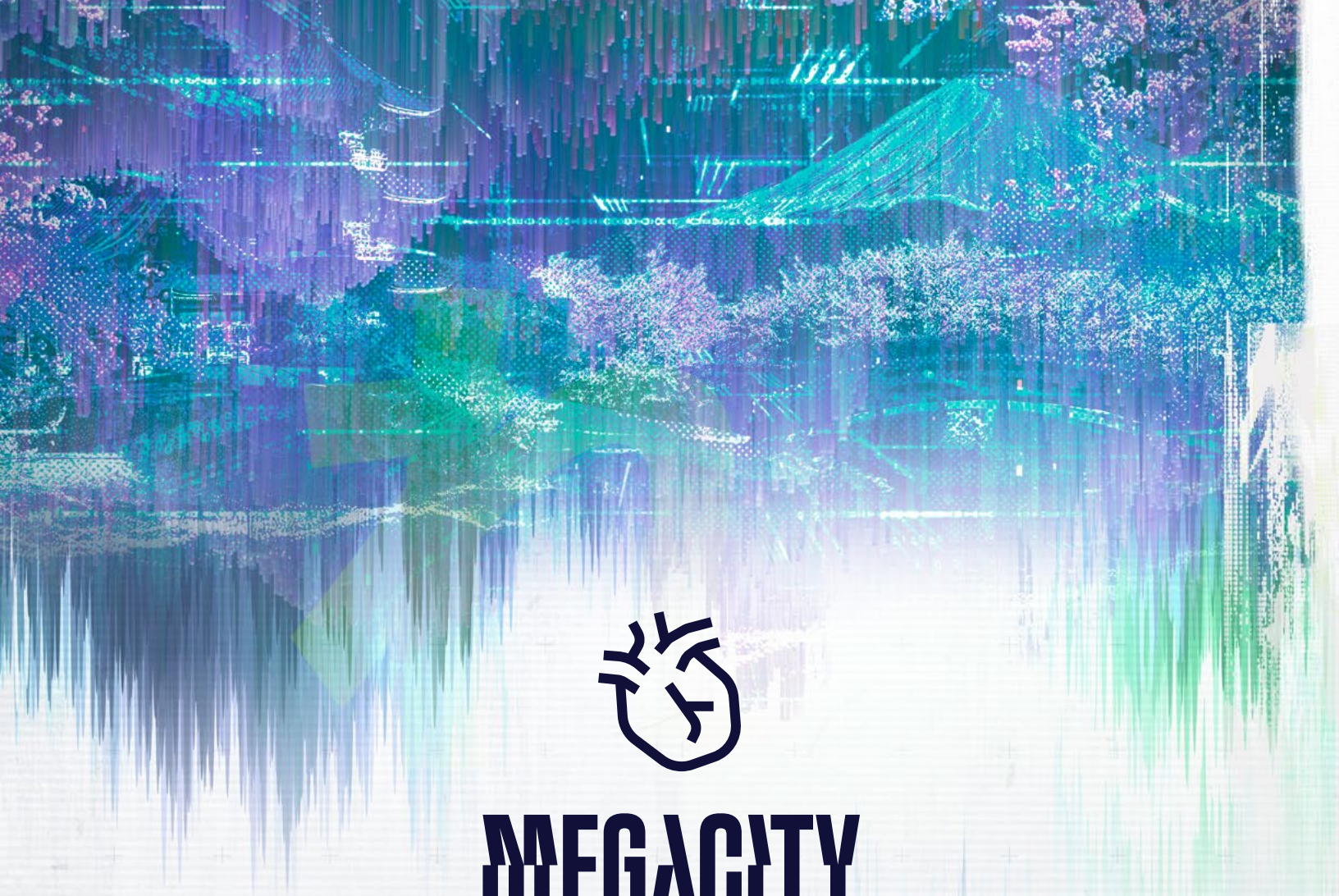
//YŌKAI DATABASE

Adversaries of Tokyo 20XX

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MEGACITY ADVERSARIES

The Tokyo Megacity and its outlying areas are teeming with dangers. Some are the result of technology gone wrong, others are horrific expressions of Japanese myth, taking modern and futuristic forms. Many Challenges are a blend of old and new, Mythos and Noise.

Though encounters with kami can be purely spiritual in nature, with the spirit never making its presence perceptible, many kami have changed with the times and now influence future tech, social movements, and places. On occasion, this makes them into a yōkai.

Everything has a kami: every place, every object, and every person has a soul to be awakened or empowered over time through care, ritual, and magic. This means that cyberspace has kami, as do science laboratories, idol shows, and trash heaps. It usually takes considerable effort or time (about a 100 years or so) for an item to become awakened, but once that happens, even a person's cyberware can be corrupted or turned against its owner. All this is to say that the possibilities for blending the spiritual and magical with the technological or cutting edge in Tokyo are endless.

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THE YŌKAI

The newly-awakened yōkai tend to reincarnate into the modern Megacity in a manner that fits the zeitgeist, dovetailing their supernatural stories and abilities with technological developments and recent Japanese urban legends.

A shapechanger fiend might manifest within genetic splicing laboratories. A trickster spirit that once sold trinkets at the roadside might now become the clerk at a 24 hour konbini store. The trappings change, but the role remains.

Most yōkai are essentially ghost stories and horror tales that come alive within this dark cyberpunk Tokyo. Some were once humans, corrupted by their own anger or a spiritual taint. Others were once benevolent kami whose domain became toxic, or came to feel slighted or forlorn. Many are simply malevolent, vicious, or hateful by nature.

Most yōkai can be *banished* with the use of Mythic warding magic. Such Esoterica is most commonly available in the Megacity through Shinto and Buddhist prayers or ofuda talismans. Some can potentially even be banished with sheer willpower and emotional strength, but at least one of the yōkai's weaknesses must be exploited for this to happen. See also **Banishing a Conjuration** in the supplement :Otherscape Action Database.

When a yōkai is banished, one of three things might happen. The weaker ones might disappear, disintegrating into wisps of nothingness. Evil spirits that inhabit natural entities, such as a Jubokko (page 106), might instead be exorcized, the corrupt presence removed, leaving behind a healthy individual. The most powerful yōkai might not be truly destroyed by banishment, and instead are forced to flee and make themselves scarce from the scene and perhaps the entire location. These evils must be handled in a more robust way, perhaps with a sealing ritual to contain them.

To prepare for an encounter with a yōkai, mercs can obtain repelling talismans that impart a *warded* status and protect the bearer from otherworldly harm, and in addition perform a spiritual purification ritual (known as harae) that imparts that status *purified*, preventing yōkai from feeding off the merc's misdeeds or negative feelings, or manipulating them.



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CYBERSPACE YŌKAI

RAKUGOKA VIRUS

The Rakugoka Virus is a recent menace in the Tokyo Tangle, lurking inside innocent-looking virtual objects. Unsuspecting cyberspace users are caught unawares, but those who pay attention might notice the passive effects of this malicious code, hinting at its presence – scraps of confetti, a subtle spotlight, hushed chuckles from a distance.

The name of the virus refers to a person who performs rakugo, a form of minimalist Japanese performance art in which a single storyteller presents a long humorous story with many puns and a powerful punch line. Similarly, the Rakugoka Virus takes its victim on a long ride full of puns and 'hilarious' moments, attempting to push them toward a conclusion that might be dramatically satisfactory, but also annoying or dangerous.

RAKUGOKA VIRUS

LIMITS

PURGED 5 **APPEASED 3**

SPECIALS

YOU'RE THE PUNCHLINE: Once per scene, when the player of an infected PC invokes and item tag in an action, the Rakugoka Virus transforms it into a silly prop. Rephrase the tag to *folding fan*, *hand towel*, *rubber chicken*, or the like for the duration of that roll only.

LIVE TO ENTERTAIN: If the effects of the virus cause someone in the scene to laugh, clap, or gasp, the Rakugoka Virus takes *appeased-1*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A soft whimsical tune is played in the background*
» **A cloud of confetti appears in AR signaling the target is infected (Escalate the situation)**

› *Laughter echo in the distance just as the PC gets ready to take action*
» **Something dangerous comes into view, such as an unexpected enemy or a trap, which is a pun fitting the situation (Present a New Challenge, which disappears after it inflicts one Consequence or if it takes any status)**

› *People around see the PC's strange behavior and silly tools*
» **The PC is laughed at (*mocked-2*)**

The virus makes it difficult to use virtual tools. In the middle of regular activity, it will suddenly rewrite the code of a VR construct into a harmless, comedic prop, or alter a user's AR view with virtual objects that seems appropriate to the moment. There's magic at work here, because for a single moment these AR images become real and tools really do change shape, just long enough to be funny, or more likely, ruin the moment. The virus is powerless against a user without a VR or AR feed – it's their perception through digital means that grants the virus the power to change things.

While the Rakugoka Virus is obviously Touched by some magical power, its exact Source and originator both remain unknown, and are likely to be hiding in a secret Domain.

YAMANBA

The yamanba are the old witches of the mountains, yōkai who have been living between distant peaks and in far-away valleys where they prey on the merchants and travelers who have the temerity to enter their lands. What they want is unclear; the extent of their magic is even less so. More than anything, they seem to enjoy toying with the lives and fortunes of mortals, whom they see as pawns and little else.

In the Megacity, the yamanba have taken to the tops of the tallest skyscrapers, practicing their crafts both new and old. The witches have embraced modern technologies, using holograms and invasive AR alongside ancient spells, to befuddle and manipulate the poor maintenance workers and occasional merc who find themselves on a building's roof. The dwellings of the yamanba are twisted, wondrous landscapes, a blend of popular media and forgotten myth, reaching even into cyberspace, although only a rare few get to witness these places and leave unharmed.

Engaging in conversation with a yamanba requires catching her attention, usually with humorous tongue-twisters or radical theories about the latest drama series she's hooked on. Once she marks someone interesting it's hard to make her relent, and that person might end up as either very fortunate or wishing for their own death. It can be worth it, though – the yamanba have ways to meld cyberspace and the physical world, allowing themselves and others to travel into cyberspace in their own bodies, while manifesting cyberspace entities and environments as if they were real physical beings.

While their abilities might be helpful, it is just as likely that any encounter with the witches will end in them binding your conscious mind into a new digital virus, which they then unleash on your friends just to see them squirm.

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It is yet unknown whether the yamanba are some hideous Conjurations spewing out of a powerful Source or human practitioners of mountain witchcraft Esoterica hailing from regions far outside the Megacity. Either way, when successfully *banished*, they leave, never to return.

YAMANBA

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | IMPRESS 4 | BANISH 4

TAGS & STATUSES

digital magic, *home field advantage*, *warded-2*, *foul-mood-3*

SPECIALS

CURSED GROUND: Bending reality with their magics, the Yamanba use chaos as a weapon. Once per scene when a PC gives a status of any kind while on the Yamanba's home turf, the Yamanba can choose a different target to receive it.

COUNTERSPELL: Once per scene, as an interjection, a Yamanba can burn a magical tag invoked by a player while counting Power. The tag does not add Power to that action, even if the player intended to burn it for Power (negating tags burnt for Power is the Yamanba's favorite use of this ability).

DIGITAL REALITY: Every digital entity in a scene with the Yamanba can be considered physical and vice versa (but not both at the same time), if she allows it. The shift is done during Establish.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A faraway voice asks a seemingly innocent question or offers a riddle, or a strange sound or yelling is heard from a distance, as powerful winds howl across the rooftop*
- » **Create a holographic obstacle in front of someone who displeases her (*sudden drop*, *twisted path*, *containers*, etc)**
- » **Twist the path so it leads to her dwelling, or prevent it from ever reaching it (Escalate the Situation or Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Cackle as images form and disappear out of the corner of one's eye*
- » **Envelop someone in a cyberspace dream (*immersed-3*)**
- » **Bind a consciousness nearby in a cyberspace construct (*imprisoned-4*)**

› *Twist her gnarly fingers at a point in space, working her magic*
- » **Summon a VR construct to fight in meatspace or a real-world adversary to fight in VR (Present a New Challenge such as a digital Wild Soul Kami (page 108) or a physical Sōhei IC (page 129))**
- » **Curse with misfortune someone who displeases her (*cursed-3*)**

YUKI-ONNA

Everyone knows that you always need to log out of a VR session properly. Otherwise, it's said, you may encounter the ghostly visage of a beautiful long-haired woman dressed in a white kimono, who appears stepping out of the static snow of a visor or holo display. Every hacker knows a story about someone who claims to have encountered her in the liminal space of crashed moments between virtual and physical reality.

Yuki-onna ("snow woman") is usually seen carrying a bundle and asking for help carrying it. Helping her, or even getting anywhere near her, leads to a growing chill that becomes more and more unbearable the friendlier she gets. The bundle looks like a wrapped-up baby, but inside the wrappings is just formless junk data that clings to one's avatar and makes them so heavily encumbered they can't move, the snow eventually covering them until they freeze and die. When a hacker is found frozen solid in their seat while still Harnessed, it is said to be because they were visited by Yuki-onna.

Yuki-onna prefers to approach isolated individuals. She appears before someone in the moments they disconnect from VR abruptly or are under fire, a few milliseconds stretched to several minutes from the person's perspective, during which no one else can come and help them. She enjoys watching people succumbing to the cold, or perhaps she is fascinated by how they slowly die as their body fails.

There is a soft side to her, however, and if told of an injustice or slight that was done to her victim – especially if children are involved – she might take offense in their name and offer her help in righting the wrong. Some say this is because she herself was once a woman who suffered a great injustice.

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YUKI-ONNA

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE –

TAKE OVER –

CRASH OR BANISH 4

SOFTEN 5

RESTART EQUIPMENT 4

SOFTEN: The PC gains *favor of Yuki-onna* and everyone escapes the scene safely.

RESTART EQUIPMENT: The PCs logs off safely and escape the scene. Recover all tags burnt by Snowy Limbo and remove the *disconnected* status, if any.

TAGS & STATUSES

silent beauty, *snowy landscape*, *soft spot for children*

SPECIALS

SNOWY LIMBO: When a user disconnects abruptly from cyberspace, they find themselves in the Yuki-Onna's Enclave. User interfaces completely shut down and become unusable until restarted: all PCs present take *disconnected-5* and burn all cyberspace hardware and software tags. This can only be mitigated with Mythic or Self means.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Draw closer, presenting the bundle in her arms and pleading for help*
- » **Soften the victim's heart with magical power (*convinced-3*)**
- » **Kindly touch the victim and help them trust her (*trusting-3*)**
- » **Hand over the bundle to a willing victim and thank them (*encumbered-5* and the Yuki-Onna gains *soften-2*)**

› *Snow falls*
- » **The snow piles on (*frozen-5*)**
- » **Any digital capabilities that survived the first disconnect now gutter out and die (burn up to two cyberspace tags)**
- » **A digital snow storm rages (*blinded-3* to all victims)**

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HAUNTED LOCALES

FUNAYUREI-HAUNTED OFFICE COMPLEX

Tokyo is littered with zaibatsu blocks, and it's only natural that not all of them are full of success stories. Many office buildings are home to small companies that no longer have any viability and perhaps never had, created by their zaibatsu for tax purposes or to manipulate the numbers. These companies do nothing but shift around some data, their employees working a literally meaningless job, which is nonetheless exhausting and time consuming. Most of these companies are also sinking ships, slowly losing whatever little support they had from their sister-corps, dragging their zombie-like workers along into the mire.

When a staff member inevitably succumbs to exhaustion and dies, the powerful symbolic instance of such karoshi ("overwork death") can raise their spirit as an onryō, a vengeful ghost, of a kind that shares many similarities with the ghosts of resentful drowned sailors, the funayūrei ("boat spirit"). These "office funayūrei", like the spirits of the sailors, died as part of a crew who was drowning, with no hope and no help. Unlike the sailors, most of their crew is still alive, and still drowning – and the funayūrei wish to hasten their demise, to shipwreck the entire company.

Because these companies are small and irrelevant, there's little to stop the spirits from getting their wish. There's no one who cares enough to bring an onmyōji or call some mercs for an exorcism. Under the influence of the yōkai the company crashes, the bosses demand more overtime, and eventually the entire staff stops going home and work themselves to death, joining the ranks of the funayūrei.

A funayūrei-haunted building is filled with wandering souls. The spirits of salespeople and secretaries drift through the bland, samey corridors in which they worked, passing by shades of callous bosses and unempathetic coworkers. The people of the block forget this building is even here.

The crew might find themselves inside by chance during a chase, as a hiding place from their foes or baited inside by an escaping enemy. They might pick the bland building as an ideal place to establish a lookout or a sniper nest, overlooking a more important building in the zaibatsu block. It could also be that some useful information about the zaibatsu is still accessible in the building or its Domain – which is just as haunted as the physical space.

FUNAYUREI-HAUNTED OFFICE COMPLEX

LIMITS

TRAVERSE 4 **EXORCISE 5** **RAGE 3**

RAGE: The funayūrei rush through everyone in the scene with blind rage (*spectral-tearing-4*), and the Limit resets.

TAGS & STATUSES

chilling damp, *labyrinthine halls*, *moaning and creaking*, *creepy-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The environment fills with ghostly signs: fog, flickers of fluorescent light, moans, and creaks of wood, saltwater footsteps leading away to someplace else*
- » **A paper or electronics item becomes damp and moldy (burn a tag)**
- » **Someone hears a voice saying their shift is starting, drawing them to a side office or cubicle (*must-finish-paperwork-3* compelling status)**
- » **The spirits of the dead pass in the corridor just outside the field of vision (*frightened-3*)**

› *A ghostly apparition appear in a cloud of glowing fog*
- » **Agonized moans and visions of self-inflicted violence fill the air (inflict *shocked-2* and gain *rage-2*)**
- » **Drag a victim away from their friends with spectral arms (Escalate the situation and inflict *panicking-2*)**
- » **Fill someone's mouth with saltwater or stale coffee (*drowning-3*)**

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KUBIRE-ONI-HAUNTED CAPSULE APARTMENT

The cheapest residences in Tokyo are dilapidated, water-stained capsule apartments that can barely fit a futon in their tiny living areas. Despair hangs in the air as most neighbors have been broken by impossible societal demands and countless dead ends, reduced into thin recluses who avoid each other and sink into their Noise-filled VR interfaces.

An unseen influence haunts these apartments. Feeding on the mental anguish of the residents is the Kubire-Oni, a yōkai that curses people with crippling despair. It makes its lair in the decrepit service basement of the complex, or atop the rooftop, or even in a neglected staircase, sneaking next to the tenants' apartments at night to whisper awful things to them. When their victim's despair reaches its peak, the yōkai creeps its hair through the cracks and vents, creating a noose for them, inviting death.

Isolated is a compelling status, and any attempt by the resident to leave the apartment requires a roll hindered by the status. The status also applies to actions that attempt to remove it, by oneself or by others. When a resident's *isolated* reaches tier-5, they cannot leave the apartment. At tier-6, they are found horizontally hung from a noose made of the Kubire-Oni's hair.

KUBIRE-ONI

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 **BANISH 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

inhuman speed, *stealthy-2*, *evasive-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Stalk close to an apartment's door and whisper poisonous words, perceived as a dream or one's own thoughts*

» **Encourage someone inside to shut themselves off from society (*isolated-1* or turn a status of negative emotions into *isolated* of the same tier)**

» **Curse someone to suffer distress such as being bullied, become overburdened by their job, or have a loved one suffer a tragedy (*Kubire-Oni-curse-3*, hindering actions to prevent the described event)**

» **Slink away and hide in the vents (Deny Them Something They Want)**

The Kubire-Oni is a small humanoid with a monstrous head with very long hair and short hands and a lower half that trails into mist. It's incredibly fast, using its speed and small size to avoid direct encounters and sneak through a building's hidden paths. As such, it may take more than one encounter to lure it out and properly dispense with it.

The PCs may be looking for someone at the complex, especially a human who works or lives in cyberspace and needs a place to store their body; one of the PCs may be using the capsule complex (or coffin hotel) as a residence, temporarily or long term, becoming a potential victim; or an NPC the crew cares for or in whom they have an interest could become more and more *isolated*, spurring them to investigate their residence in the complex.

MURAHACHIBU BAR

Hidden away in an alley is the underground Murahachibu Bar. Named after a kind of rural social practice where a culprit is shunned by an entire village, the bar stylized itself as a place for the outcasts of society, a popular hangout for

MURAHACHIBU BAR

TAGS & STATUSES

laser lights and loud noise, *no limits*, *wild-2*

THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A patron or a bartender approaches with an irresistible offer (drug, info, good time)*

» **A PC gets exactly the distraction they were going for (*high-2*, *tired-2*, *broke-2*, or *charmed-2*)**

» **A PC is offered information, but it will cost them (choose between *broke-3* or Deny Them Something They Want)**

» **A PC is dragged by the nose for a long time, but nothing comes out of it (advance a time-related progress status or Escalate the situation elsewhere)**

» **A PC gets invested in the conversation, coming to believe in a new cause (*radicalized-3*)**

› *A PC is being called out for being a corp shill or otherwise an outsider*

» **The crowd spews slurs and combative language (*snubbed-2* or *humiliated-2*)**

» **A patron unexpectedly throws a rageful punch at the PC**

› **The owner gives a stern warning (*unwanted-1*, at tier-5 becomes *banned*)**

› **The Bokuba Goblins arrive, to make some noise (Present a New Challenge: Bokuba Goblins, page 115)**

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street ronins looking for the next job and for punks wanting to rock out. Illuminated by lasers and erupting with drunken cheers, musicians perform underground genres such as the disharmonious synthesized "Japanoise", the minimalist and improvised Onkyokei, and aggressive hardcore punk. All these concerts are accompanied by the bands' avant-garde performance arts that are scandalous or outright dangerous. The punks of Murahachibu are free to express themselves here, seeing it as an act of rebellion against their enemies who already control the city: the megacorporations.

Murahachibu Bar is a place to get favors, information, rumors, or just wasted.

RIKU AND RIYO'S CYBERNETIC CLINIC

Anyone who needs a quick tuneup, upgrade, or an emergency surgery by replacing organs with cybernetics can visit the twins Riku and Riyo's Cybernetic Clinic. The clinic isn't easy to find; it's tucked under a crumbling husk of a hospital somewhere in the front lines of the Yakushi Medical Corridor corporate warzone.

Originally co-workers and professional rivals in a high-paid cybernetics R&D facility, the mechanical geniuses are today literally joined at the hip after Riku lost his body to an illness. Before his body expired, Riku pulled a final prank and uploaded an approximation of his consciousness into Riyo's assistive cybernetic suite – a set of surgically-precise extra arms attached at his waistline. With his own set of limbs and a projected holographic torso, Riku was back in the game, after a fashion. That naturally backfired; the cybernetic suite became the Source of the Dōmokōmo, a two-headed yōkai that were once surgeons who killed themselves trying to win a contest against each other. There was no removing it, or deleting the Riku code. In fact, simulated Riku only became more and more like his real self, essentially brought back from the dead. The bitter rivals have been stuck with each other ever since, constantly bickering, but they also became the best cybersurgeons in the field, capable of achieving far beyond what is possible with current technology. To add insult to injury, mercs started referring to them simply as "the twins".

The twins' skill at surgery is so great that the installed body mods feel more natural than the original and recovery is instant. A PC client can pick out new cybernetic story or loadout tags for their character; in return, the twins inflict 2 tiers of statuses for each tag, divided between *cybernetic-addiction* and *broke*. *Cybernetic-addiction* is a compelling status that drives the client to install more cyberware. It applies to any actions attempting to remove it.

A PC can also approach the Clinic looking for a quick fix or a tune up. This can **Restore** up to three tags in a Noise themebook or remove up to three tiers of statuses affecting tech. As their fee, the twins similarly inflict 2 tiers of statuses per tag restored or 1 tier of status per status tier removed, divided between *cybernetic-addiction* and *broke*.

The twins' *quarreling* does not affect their performance, but it hinders many social actions against them.

RIKU AND RIYO'S CYBERNETIC CLINIC

TAGS & STATUSES

quarreling-2

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The twins see someone for a consultation, disagreeing about everything*
» **The twins eventually recommend a procedure that replaces more than the client originally intended (*cybernetic-addiction-2*)**

› *While installing cyberware, the twins begin criticizing each other's shoddy mechanical work*
» **Break into a petty shouting match (gain *quarreling-3*)**

› *Intrusive thoughts begin to circle, leading to a conscious preoccupation with the meat still in one's body*
» **A PC feels their native body is not enough and they desire a new upgrade (*cybernetic-addiction-2*)**
» **An addict gets envious or loses confidence after seeing someone with better augmentations (*envious-2* or *dejected-2*)**

» **Bill a patient with maintenance fees (*broke-1*) or a costly installment (*broke-4*)**

» **Defend themselves by using bone saws (*flesh-wound-2*) or by shutting down someone's tech (burn four tags describing technology)**



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TANUKI RAMEN STAND

Tanuki are mischievous racoon dog spirits that lure people into traps to play pranks on them using illusions and shapeshifting. Their tricks are relatively harmless, and if a clever person manages to see through their disguise, they might grace them with their presence for a few hours of drinking sake and partying. The tanuki bear a grudge toward the kitsune, and might get into competitions with them to see who is the most clever of the two yōkai.

All around Tokyo are ramen corner shops and hovering yatai (food carts) owned by the jolly and mischievous tanuki, in disguise. They weave glamors to lure in customers, particularly drunks who are looking for an after-drink meal late at night. As the tanuki cooks or entertains patrons, they listen in to conversations for rumors slipped from drunken lips, which they then share among their kind; it is said that the tanuki know every rumor in Tokyo. The tanuki can never be trusted, as they enjoy playing pranks, swindling patrons with illusory money, or even spreading lies and half-truths just to sow chaos. Before someone realizes they've been tricked, the tanuki packs up their entire shop inside their apron, and moves on to find new victims.

TANUKI VENDOR

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **THREATEN 4**

OUTSMART OR IMPRESS 3 **BANISH 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

shapeshifter, *cheerful-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Pour sake for a patron and grin connivingly or hint at a juicy rumor they've heard around*
- » **Refuse to keep talking without sharing a drink (*tipsy-2* or Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Offer calming platitudes (*lax-2*)**
- » **Catch on to a trick (remove up to two tiers from *outsmart*)**
- » **Exchange valuables with leaves or trash covered by an illusion (burn a tag when revealed)**
- » **An item is 'misplaced' (burn a tag)**

» **Disappear along with their entire stand (Deny Them Something They Want)**



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UCHIWA CORPORATE BANK

Getting everything you want – everything you're being told you *need* – costs more than most residents of Tokyo can afford. When even 16-hour shifts aren't enough to bring in the cash, the desperate either turn to crime or are forced to take loans from companies such as the Uchiwa Corporate Bank. Inhabited by binbōgami ("kami of poverty"), Uchiwa bleeds its customers dry to the last yen with predatory deals.

Binbōgami bankers seek to cause misery and poverty. They achieve this by trapping people in inescapable contracts with high interest rates, hidden charges, and other predatory lending practices. The bankers inflict a Mythical power of misfortune, which can ruin even the richest person in Tokyo, but while their contracts are constricting, they always allow for one specific way out – someone else taking the debt from you.

A PC can accept the bank's offer to take *wealthy* of tier 2 to 4 along with *indebted* of one tier lower. *Wealthy* statuses granted by Uchiwa Corporate Bank disappear quickly and never survive past the next downtime; *indebted*, however, sticks around.

UCHIWA CORPORATE BANK

LIMITS

ESCAPE CONTRACT 5

TAGS & STATUSES

airtight contract, *powerful lawyers*

SPECIALS

ABSURD INTEREST RATES: At the end of a downtime, the Uchiwa Corporate Bank can deliver Consequences to an *indebted* PC.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Fast talk through the loan contract*
- » **Point out a hidden clause in the contract (remove up to two tiers from statuses on *escape-contract*)**

- » **Curse a customer with bad luck (*misfortune-3*)**
- » **Curse a customer's assets to devalue or break (burn two asset tags)**

- » **Increase debt through interest and extra fees (*indebted-1*)**
- » **Send corporate security to force someone to pay or arrest anyone who can't (Present a New Challenge: Security Guard (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 305), Scale 1)**

PROWLING YŌKAI

AKKOROKAMUI TENTACLE

The Akkorokamui is a gigantic sea beast that seldom makes an appearance in the Megacity, but several practitioners of the arcane arts have learned how to summon one of its tentacles – which is usually more than enough.

The massive tentacle is lined with rows of powerful suckers on its underside, appearing out of any surface which then becomes wet with sea foam, protruding from solid floors and walls as if they were water. It can sink into the surface again and rise out of a different one, floor, wall, or ceiling. If the tentacle receives any status on its *dehydrate* Limit, it will immediately attempt to flee back into the water.

Without a summoner to guide it, the tentacle flails wildly, smashing and grabbing at anything that comes near. It is attracted to electromagnetic radiation, or in other words, the person with most cyberware around.

Invisible-current impedes any movement within close proximity of the tentacle, making everyone feel like they're moving through waist high water, even if none is present.

AKKOROKAMUI TENTACLE

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **BANISH 3** **DEHYDRATE 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

giant tentacle, *immovable*, *invisible-current-3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Feel blindly around the room*
- » **Swing wildly in all directions (*bruised-2* or *toppled-2* to everyone within its reach)**
- » **Slam down on a random target (*bruised-3*)**

› *Swing and turn toward someone specifically*
- » **Grab the target (*bound-4*)**
- » **Tighten its grip (*crushed* with the same tier as *bound*)**

- » **Sink into the surface and reappear somewhere else (*superior-position-1* and remove one tier from *dehydrate*)**

- » **Inky water covers electrical equipment, causing it to malfunction (burn a relevant tag)**

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JOROGUMO

Jorogumo are monstrous spiders who disguise themselves inside beautiful android bodies in order to seduce their victims, luring them to dark, secluded areas where they surprise, ensnare, and finally eat them. They stalk the entertainment districts of the Megacity, making the night scene their hunting grounds.

Those unlucky enough to find themselves in the lair of a Jorogumo – which can be a dimly lit small apartment, a deserted booth, or literally a cave – have more than just the creature and its android host to contend with – electronically-charged webbing floats through the air, ensnaring cybernetic components or tech. The Jorogumo also employs swarms of ally drones in the shape of spiders, eager to crawl over its prey and restrain them. Once the victim is fully constricted, the Jorogumo can take its time and eat them over many hours.

JOROGUMO

LIMITS

HURT 3 **BANISH 2** **TAKE OVER OR SHUTDOWN ANDROID 3**

SPECIALS

A BODY TO DIE FOR: The first time a PC sees the Jorogumo inside its android body, they take *captivated-2* or *impressed-2*.

THE JOROGUMO LAIR: The lair has *electric webbings* and *darkness*, and the Jorogumo has *home field advantage* while it's in its lair.

NANOWEAVE WEBBING: When the Jorogumo enters a conflict in its lair, it can shoot nanoweave webbing as an interjection, inflicting *malfunctioning-2* on a cybernetic augmentation or piece of tech a PC possesses.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Silently seduce*
» **Encourage the victim to follow (*captivated-2* or *impressed-2*)**

› *Open the android body up to reveal a giant spider*
» **Terrify the surprised victim (*terrified-4*)**

› *Fill the air with the soft hiss of thousands of sticky strands*
» **Shoot sticky webbings at someone (*entangled-3*)**

› *Play distorted versions of the Jorogumo's voice over the sounds of dozens of carapace joints moving*
» **Summon its spider drones to swarm over everyone nearby (*swarmed-2* to all in its vicinity)**

› *While trying to escape the lair, sticky strands are in the way*
» **The strands cling to everything and damage electronics (*entangled-3* and *malfunctioning-2*)**

JUBOKKO

When the roots of a tree feed on enough spilled blood, it could become a Jubokko – a deceptive and vampiric yōkai that feeds on the blood of unsuspecting human passers-by. A Jubokko reveals its true nature by turning its leaves crimson-red just before its branches reach like needles to puncture the victim and drain their blood. Its *disguised* nature hinders mitigation rolls to avoid this fate.

A Jubokko's bloody "sap" is highly valued for its pharmaceutical properties, and teams of unfortunate mercenaries are often sent to extract the sap, preferably without becoming the tree's next meal in the process. This is doubly risky because Jubokko are most commonly found within the Megacity's many pollution-soaked ruins, and many of them have absorbed toxin, radiation, or industrial pollutants instead of blood. Instead of feeding upon human blood, these variant demonic trees attempt to unload these dangerous substances into their victim's bloodstream through injection. The color of the leaves of these variants varies according to the contaminant, rust-red for toxins, neon-orange for industrial pollutants, or sick-purple for radiation. Only the crimson-red variant has value, but the only tried-and-true method of forcing a Jubokko to reveal the true color of its leaves is to present it with a victim.

JUBOKKO

LIMITS

CUT DOWN 4 **BANISH 3** **EXTRACT SAP 3**

EXTRACT SAP: The PC receives Jubokko sap story tag, which can be used as a healing salve.

TAGS & STATUSES

agile branches, *thick bark*, *disguised-3* (expires once it first attacks), Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Change the color of its leaves as someone approaches*

› *The crimson-red tree's branches are poised to strike, seeking bare skin*
» **Whip a branch at its victim to puncture flesh and draw blood or inject poison (*drained-3* or *poisoned-3*, and the Jubokko gains *invigorated* with the same tier or removes that number of tiers from harmful statuses)**

› *Shift its roots along the ground, coiling to strike*
» **Wrap its roots around a victim (*entangled-3*)**

› **Blood trickles out of a wound in the bark, or the remains of a dry corpse is discovered between the roots (*creeped-out-2*)**

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KAMI

Though nearly any supernatural creature in Tokyo can be called a kami, the word most commonly refers to the beings worshiped and revered by Anachronist and Neo-Anachronist Shinto adherents, usually tutelary spirits of natural locations and shrines. These beings are at once the place itself and an entity that represents it, which can manifest in a material body, usually that of a person or an animal. Shinto tradition teaches that the kami should be paid proper respect, and most kami who are treated honorably respond in kind.

Without proper attention and reverence, a kami can grow petty or bored. Worse, if their land is defiled by the negative energies of Noise or pollution, it might bring them into a disharmonious state in which their **ara-mitama ("wild soul")** manifests, a violent and furious aspect of their being. The wild soul can be placated and the kami restored to **nigi-mitama ("gentle soul")**, whether through appropriate ritual or by being shown the business side of an ofuda talisman.

A kami's domain is usually anchored in a physical location, but some have manifested in digital Domains. There are many inhuman entities in the Tokyo Tangle that are more magic than data, hiding behind skins and disguises that present a human-looking avatar. Even among the kami who reside in meatspace, the use of AR disguises is commonplace, adding to their natural inclination to mask their presence. Some kami have no special reason to remain anchored here or there, shifting between a corporeal form and a cyberspace form in the blink of an eye.

A kami who is shown reverence or is otherwise convinced to grant aid [*appease*], can do so in the form of story tags, changing elements in its domain or revealing the path to something useful. It can also grant [*kami]'s-blessing*, which aids with handling the particular skill, area, animal, or any other thing that kami is known for. All annoyance or anger statuses are polar to *appease*.

A *banished* kami is not truly gone, and can eventually return. A *sealed* one is kept inactive under a magical seal – until one day the area is bulldozered or someone comes looking for long-buried power. A Wild Soul Kami's *tainted* hinders magical powers that act against it.

KAMI, GENTLE SOUL

LIMITS

BANISH OR SEAL 3 **APPEASE 3** **BEFOUL DOMAIN 3**

BEFOUL DOMAIN: The Kami becomes a Wild Soul, removing all its current statuses.

TAGS & STATUSES

kami's domain, *otherworldly-2*

SPECIALS

GREATER SPIRIT (+): Increase all Limits by 1 and give the Kami *magical prowess* which affects all attempts to affect it with magic or resist its magical powers.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Whisper softly on the wind or cause someone to shiver slightly*
» **Reveal a natural vista or phenomena in all its mighty splendor (*awed-2* or *inspired-to-help-2*)**

› *Manifest within its place of power to protect its Domain*
» **Attack with a natural element, weapon, or appendage (*injured-3*, *crushed-3*, *poisoned-3*, *drowned-3*, *snagged-3*, etc.)**
» **The scenery shifts drastically (Escalate the Situation or create a story tag)**

› *Long periods of time pass without offerings or attention*
» **Grow resentful, the negative emotions corrupting its domain (gain *befoul-domain-1*)**

» **Use the environment or nearby animal to signal its displeasure (gain *annoyed-1*)**

» **Anger, sorrow, or regret seep into the Kami's domain (change any negative emotional statuses into *befoul-domain* of the same tier)**

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KAMI, WILD SOUL

LIMITS

BANISH OR SEAL 5 **APPEASE 5**

APPEASE: If *befouled* was removed, the Kami becomes a Gentle Soul. If not, it dematerializes and disengages, for now.

TAGS & STATUSES

kami's domain, *enraged-3*, *tainted-3*

SPECIALS

GREATER RAGEFUL SPIRIT (+ ⌖): Increase all Limits and starting statuses by 1 and give the Kami *magical prowess* which affects all attempts to affect it with magic or resist its magical powers.

AWE INSPIRING APPARITION OF ANGER: Any character seeing an ara-mitama Kami for the first time becomes *frightened-3*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The wild soul manifest as a burning entity*
- » **Lash out physically, erupting with a shockwave of rage (*burned-3* and *crushed-3*, create *burning wild soul*)**
- » **Devour nearby Sources (burn a Mythic tag and gain *empowered-1*)**
- » **Spread the taint by touching someone or something (*tainted-2*)**

› *Items fly around, water boil, papers catch on fire, AR is filled with threatening images*
- » **Smolder silently, dwelling on perceived slights (*enraged-2*)**
- » **An innocent gets badly hurt (Make the Future Bleaker)**

› *A raging, demonic face appears as everything around shakes*
- » **Unleash the anger in the form of a natural disaster (inflict a tier-4 status on everyone, such *drowning-4*, *burning-4*, *buried-under-debris-4*)**

› *Mock someone and their convictions with terrifyingly precise details*
- » **Bring out deep emotions (*shamed-3*, *furious-3*, or *sorrowful-3*)**

NINGYO

Once refugees fleeing from disaster-stricken island communities and Touched by an unknown oceanic Source, the Ningyo are human-sized fish yōkai with human-like faces and arms who now haunt the forgotten waterways of the Megacity. Sewers, abandoned desalination facilities, and broken down water treatment plants have become the new abode for these once sea-dwelling folk. The hidden network of forgotten infrastructure has granted them a vast reach underneath the Megacity, away from the eyes of the populace at large.

Hunted for the promise that consuming their flesh would grant immortality, the fish-human hybrids have turned the tables on their one-time hunters, now preying on lost humans for their organs and tissues. The best quality organs are sold through intermediaries as transplant-ready biological goods in places such as the Ghost Market. Anything else is consumed.

As Touched humans, the Ningyo cannot be *banished*. Some Ningyo naturally have no arms, but in the age of cybernetics, this is no longer an issue.

NINGYO

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 **APPEASE 3**

APPEASE: The Ningyo is now willing to negotiate a trade, offering *biological enhancement*.

TAGS & STATUSES

cybernetic enhancements, *gills*, *slippery-2*

SPECIALS

CONCEALED TRAP: Once per scene during Establish, when fighting on their home turf, the Ningyo can spring a trap that applies *nausea-2* to a group.

DART AWAY: The first time in the scene that a Ningyo is harmed on their home turf, they hide in the water and gain *hidden-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Make a demand or ask a wary question*
- » **Become suspicious of the humans (gain *untrusting-2*)**
- » **Warn others not to cross them or dare to take another step forward (more Ningyo appear from the water, increasing Scale by 1)**

› *Raise a net gun*
- » **Shoot a sticky bio-suspension net (*entangled-3*)**

› *Power up a cybernetic organ-harvesting tool over an entangled victim*
- » **Surgically remove the organ of an entangled victim (*missing-organ-6*)**

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TESSO, THE IRON RAT

Tesso – the Iron Rat – is a yōkai worshiped at the Nezumi-no-Hokura ("The Rat Shrine"), or at least, it used to be. Relentless urban expansion ruined the temple complex hosting Tesso's shrine, and the ancient spirit stirred in displeasure. It pushed through the Noise until it could find something to lodge itself into, and came to possess a truck-sized robotic hauler, one of the vehicles used to destroy the shrine. A horde of rats then appeared and took over the construction area, driving away all intruders and granting Tesso a little peace.

Infused with metal and electricity, Tesso grew aware of cyberspace. Once it reached into Nearspace and the Tangle, the Iron Rat became mesmerized by the unending, interconnected, cluttered mess – like a rat's nest. Tesso manifested a horde of digital rat constructs which began to spread over the local network, sniffing around, while the meatspace rats that inhabited the construction site magically developed cybernetics in order to be networked as well. The horde began to pilfer new technologies from the shops and vehicles around, with Tesso slowly developing a greater understanding of cybernetics, constantly upgrading its army with more complex designs.

Tesso now wishes to increase its network connectivity, to create a home for itself in cyberspace, and to get the reverence it deserves from the people of the town. This scheme involves using its technological rats to erect communications towers that create a sub-layer in Nearspace, allowing Tesso and its constructs to spread, burrow, and steal while remaining 'behind the walls and under the floors' of the Tangle, where no one would notice them. Eventually, Tesso wants the shrine grounds to be restored, but it hasn't given much thought as to how to achieve that.

Tesso's Source is the Thin Place at its ruined shrine. While it is inhabiting the Touched hauler mech that demolished the site (use a Scale 2 pilotless Mecha, page 127), it can also manifest as a Conjuration wherever enough rats gather in town. It usually appears as a metallic rat, around four feet tall, composed of junk metal sheets, servos, and electronics, as if assembled from a tech dump. It can also appear as a heavily-augmented human with a rat's face, if it wishes to approach someone personally. It can't speak nor does it fully understand people, but it knows enough to manipulate people against each other, which is its preferred way to dispose of any opposition. The rats listen and Tesso replays the juiciest bits to ears that really shouldn't be hearing them, creating discord that diverts attention from its works.

The Limits listed for Tesso are for one of its specific manifestations. To fully appease or banish the yōkai, the crew will need to perform a ritual at the construction site.



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CYBERNETIC RATS

These vermin are Tesso's eyes and ears, and in large enough numbers, brute enforcers. They appear as a collective of cyborg rats in various states of transition, some mostly organic with a few enhancements, others almost entirely made of chrome and electronics.

The rats aren't as intelligent as humans, but they're cunning. They fight if cornered or if Tesso commands, but otherwise avoid direct contact. The rats may appear at first as a minor nuisance that steals any bit of electronics and metal they can get their paws on, but a closer inspection will reveal how suspiciously hard to hack they are.

The rats usually appear in a swarm of several dozens, Scale 2. Tesso's VR construct rats use the same Challenge Profile as the meatspace cyber-rats.

NEZUMI PUNKS

A few tiny gangs and groups of street vagrants have fallen in line with Tesso, performing work the rats can't in exchange for a loyal partner in petty crime. At first, they believed the rats to be their servants, but in time a subculture formed and they begun to adopt rat-themed fashion and slang as part of a group identity. Some now revere Tesso, despite none knowing its name or even realizing it is a yōkai with a (ruined) shrine right in their town, while the especially devoted customize their own pet rats with crude cybernetic surgeries.

These Nezumi ("rats") Punks think of themselves as rulers of their streets, but they're just as cowardly as the average rat. They usually mock and taunt their enemies, attempting to draw them into an alley where they can surround and intimidate them into surrendering their valuables, hoping to avoid having to act on their threats. If there's no choice, they storm their foes in tandem with their upgraded rats in a quick and savage assault.

TESSO, THE IRON RAT

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **APPEASE 3** **SHUTDOWN OR BANISH 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

cyberspace awareness, *evasive-3*

SPECIALS

MINIONS: When Tesso takes a status from which its minions can protect him, they take the status instead (Cybernetic Rats or Nezumi Punks).

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A PC catches a glint of metal in the trash, or a strange nose beneath a large hat*
» **To avoid notice, Tesso finds somewhere to hide (gain *hidden-2*)**

› *Replay recorded human speech to push people against each other*
» **Someone is upset or agitated by what they hear (*taunted-2*, *angry-2*, or *slighted-2* and Escalate the Situation)**

› *Chitter and squeak, in meatspace and Nearspace*
» **More rats gather around (Present a New Challenge: Cybernetic Rats or increase an existing Cybernetic Rats Challenge's Scale by 1)**
» **Herd nearby minions (give *organized-2* to nearby Cybernetic Rats)**
» **Cyberspace becomes more tangled around the area (*tangled-signals-2*)**

» **Bite with metal fangs (*wounded-2*)**

» **Run into a maze of trash-filled alleys (Deny Them Something They Want if they let it escape, or *lost-3* to anyone who follows)**

CYBERNETIC RATS

LIMITS

HURT OR CRASH 1 **TAKE OVER OR SHUTDOWN 2**

TAGS & STATUSES

firewalled-1, and choose a different cybernetic tag for the Rats each time the PCs encounter them: *cloaked body*, *detachable tail*, *electromagnetic screech*, *red hot fangs*, etc.

SPECIALS

RATS EVERYWHERE: When a PC enters the town haunted by Tesso, they take *surveilled-1*.

LURKING NEARBY: If a PC has *surveilled-3* or higher, once per scene, the Cybernetic Rats can enter the scene and inflict a Consequence without first making a Threat.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Faint metallic scraping is heard in the walls or in Nearspace*
» **The screeching is nerve-wracking (*tense-1*)**

› *Rats scurry around and sniff around the PCs*
» **Rats take a piece of tech or code from a PC (burn a tag)**

› *A rat runs along the wall, or a rat construct runs across AR*
» **Listen in on conversations and record them (*surveilled-1*)**
» **Disrupt local networks (*bad-signal-1*)**

› *Swarm in, communicating digitally*
» **Bite with metal fangs (*bitten-1* or *short-circuited-1* to cybernetics in meatspace; *crashed-1* in cyberspace)**
» **Separate into two hordes to maneuver (split into two collectives of one less Scale and gain *dodging-1*)**
» **More rats appear from the shadows (increase Scale by 1)**

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Nezumi Punks are always accompanied by cybernetic rats, which can be presented as their own Challenge, or as a *cybernetic rats* tag, which interferes with the PC's action or mitigation against the Punks. The Punks can equip their accompanying rats with a unique weapon tag such as *toxic claws*, *distracting patterns*, *taser fangs*, or *signal jammers*.

Punks rarely hang around on their own, and are usually in groups of five or more (Scale 2).

RAT TOWERS

When enough upgraded Cybernetic Rats pool together around a tall structure, such as a crane, and the cyberspace connection in the area is entangled enough with Tesso's rat constructs, the horde can transform into a towering abomination of wriggling rat bodies. They become an antenna, broadcasting a magical jamming signal that suppresses all non-rat communications, effectively evicting from cyberspace anyone Tesso does not approve of and shutting down transmission-vulnerable cyberware. This interference is represented with the status *rat-network*, which covers the entire ward. The top of the rat pile looks like a rat-head with an antenna, formed from the metallic tails of several rats intertwined, and it twitches as it transmits data.

Tesso plans to erect a Rat Tower in a major location in town as a warning if the people don't come to appreciate and revere it soon. It also aims to create a Rat Tower over the broken remains of the torii gate at the entrance to the construction site, to turn the demolished shrine complex into a Thin Place rat's nest, existing partly within cyberspace.

The Rat Tower disrupts networks and hinders all electronics with an unending mixed signal of human speech and rat noises. Only those who have Tesso's blessing, like its rats and the Nezumi Punks, are immune.

NEZUMI PUNK

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 **THREATEN 2**

TAGS & STATUSES

punk attitude, *sneaky*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Brag about their "rat kami" or their own exploits*
» **Play obnoxious music, mock someone's gear, or call them names (*provoked-2*)**

› *Retreat and draw a provoked foe toward an alley*
» **If they follow, reveal more Nezumi Punks waiting in ambush (turn *provoked* to *surrounded* of the same tier and increase their Scale by 1)**
» **Demand money or gear with threats of violence (burn a tag or *low-on-cash-1* if willing, or *threatened-2* otherwise)**

› *Call their rats with a whistle or radio signal*
» **Rats show up and surround their victim (Present a new Challenge: Cybernetic Rats and give the victim *surrounded-2*)**

› *Scream and howl as they charge*
» **Attack with a makeshift club, crowbar, or rebar (*bruised-2*) or fire a plastic pistol (*flesh-wound-2*)**
» **Get anxious when cornered (gain *reckless-attack-2*)**

RAT TOWER

LIMITS

SCATTER 5 **SHUTDOWN 5**

TAGS & STATUSES

mushy, *rat-network-4*, Scale 4

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Tumble around with the sounds of flesh sliding across metal*
» **Overwhelm and frighten onlookers (*repulsed-3* to all who see the rat tower)**

› *Play loud static and rodent squeaking sounds through nearby speakers*
» **Overwhelm system with non-stop jamming signals (burn one Noise tag for all present PCs)**
» **Galvanize the followers of Tesso (grant *galvanized-2* to Nezumi Punks and Cybernetic Rats)**

› *Countless rats appear from sewer holes and roofs*
» **The rats form into swarms (Present a New Challenge: Cybernetic Rats)**
» **The rats join the Tower (a Cybernetic Rats Challenge is removed, and remove from *scatter* a number of tiers equal to its Scale; the Tower gains any additional technological tags the rats had)**

› **Bite with countless fangs those who come close to the tower or climb it (*bitten-2*)**

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UMIBŌZU NANO SWARM

Prior to the Nanotech Disaster, several efforts were made by Japanese tech companies to clean the nation's seas using nanobots, breaking down microplastics and other non-organic waste products that littered the polluted waters. Some of these nano-hives came into contact with the Mythos of the Umibōzu, a fiendish sea yōkai, and absorbed it to become a Source.

An umibōzu can take several forms, most notably that of the giant head and torso of a completely black bald-headed monk, who rises out of the sea with no warning to sink its victim's ship. There could be one, or several; they might have fish scales, or be entirely monstrous; but in all appearances, an umibōzu arrives completely without warning to bring about sudden waves that capsize vessels.

The nanobots' corruption has thus reprogrammed them to destroy boats. Rogue swarms of cleaning nanobots now work to clear every non-organic thing from the ocean, treating ship hulls like the pollution and trash they were originally designed to handle.

UMIBŌZU NANO SWARM

LIMITS

DESTROY 5 **BANISH 3** **TAKE OVER OR SHUT DOWN 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

› *malleable form*, *repelled by tobacco smoke*, *Scale 3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A tall and strangely-moving wave rises near a ship*
- » **The amoeba-like nanite sludge rises from the water in the shape of a giant torso and bald head (*terrified-3* to everyone on board the ship)**
- » **The wave hits the ship (*capsized-4*) and everyone on board is thrown *overboard-3* (PCs who fail to mitigate this status end up in the water)**

› *Slide across non-organic matter and begin a decomposition sequence*
- » **Cause an object to lose structural integrity and begin to disintegrate (*broken-down-4* or burn up to four equipment tags)**

› **A person in the water is pulled further down by the nanite sludge (*drowning-4*)**



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WANYŪDŌ WANDERING TANK

The origin of the Wandering Tank is unclear, as two different stories are told among Tokyo's mercs – who are the main victims of the Tank's attacks. According to one story, the tyrannical CEO of a large company was working on immortality treatments by way of dissecting a magical deer, a Source of Jurōjin, God of Longevity. Looking into the eyes of the innocent dying deer, the CEO saw the error of his ways and couldn't bear living a moment longer. He jumped out of the window, and as he rolled down the tilted side of the skyscraper he transformed into the Wandering Tank as punishment for his sins, and now patrols the streets in search of other sinners to punish. The second story tells of a vengeful corp executive who, in his hatred of the mercs who foiled a magnificent plan he devised, planted his consciousness into a prototype machine and went after them. Whichever the case may be, the Wandering Tank seems keen on chasing down mercs.

The Wandering Tank is an armored ball tank – a weapons platform balanced on top of a perfect sphere – about as tall as a human, and with a giant human face. It is a Source of Wanyūdō ("wheel monk"), a yōkai in the shape of a burning cart wheel with the face of a tyrant at its center, who travels along the road between Earth and Hell, eating anyone who gets too close or damning their souls to Hell. As the Wandering Tank, it never runs out of ammo or power as it wanders the streets of Tokyo with great maneuverability and firepower, chasing down mercs where it can find them.

WANYŪDŌ WANDERING TANK

LIMITS

WRECK 5 **BANISH 4** **ESCAPE 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

great maneuverability, *heavy armor*, *short-temper-1*, *engulfed-in-flames-2*, Scale 1

SPECIALS

FLAMING WHEEL MONK: Touching the Wanyūdō Wandering Tank while it's *engulfed-in-flames* inflicts a *burned* status with the same tier.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Rev engines, filling the air with the smell of burnt fuel*
- » **Roll over someone at full speed (*broken-bones-4* and *prone-2*)**
- » **Break through a barrier or out of containment (remove two tiers from any binding status, or burn a tag representing a physical obstacle)**

› *Aim weapons and lock in on a target*
- » **Fire all cylinders at a single target (*perforated-5*) or fire a salvo at an area (multiple targets choose between *perforated-3* or *suppressed-3*)**

› *Engage in name-calling and pointed ridicule*
- » **Berate and demean someone repeatedly (*humiliated-2* or *taunted-2*)**
- » **Tell someone they're looking the wrong way, making them turn their attention somewhere else (*distracted-2*, and if not fully mitigated, the Wandering Tank appears at the point the PC is looking at and gains *superior-position-2*)**

» **Burn in a greater fiery rage (*engulfed-in-flames-3*)**

» **Take a vicious bite at someone too close, tearing their limb off with a burst of blood (*bleeding-to-death-5* or *missing-limb-6*)**

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SOCIAL PHENOMENA YŌKAI

AKA MANTO, SOCIAL MEDIA SLASHER

The Aka Manto ("Red Cloak") is an example of a yōkai manifesting out of a confluence of intense emotions of embarrassment and "uncleanness", which is conceived as a source of spiritual corruption.

The Red Cloak is a masked figure in a cloak who attacks people found alone in public toilets. It holds toilet paper of different colors in its hands, offering them to people stuck in a booth with no paper left – but choosing to take his offer is choosing one's manner of death. The Aka Manto especially likes it when they choose red, and it gets to slash its victims to pieces.

The Aka Manto is still in the process of manifesting, and its form and abilities are shifting. Perhaps due to appearing first in the cyberspace rumor mill, the yōkai is being shaped by what is being said about it. As this happens, its morals and purpose change, dragged along with it the political narrative that is currently in the news. The current tale evolved in such a way as to cast it as a semi-heroic deliverer of justice for the masses. First they said Aka Manto is a demonic janitor; then, Aka Manto was a hired help in rich homes; then, Aka Manto was said to hate the snooty elite; and now Aka Manto is thought to have come to clean up the filth in this town.

The yōkai does *not* like this and it is fighting the cyberspace influence; its *resisting-manipulation* applies to any PC's attempt to change its nature by creating new rumors.

For now, it is still stalking the helpless, appearing before someone when they are at their weakest – or at the very least, isolated. Unfortunately for it, it's possible to get rid of the Aka Manto by merely believing hard enough it's not there.

At least one popular recurring cautionary tale seems to be true about the Aka Manto in all cases: never answer its questions and never acknowledge its offers.

AKA MANTO, SOCIAL MEDIA SLASHER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE – **BANISHED 4** **DISBELIEVED 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

› *bathroom stalker*, *hates the elite*, *resisting-manipulation-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A PC who enters a public bathroom alone feels as if they are being watched*
» **The PC notices they are out of toilet paper (Escalate the situation)**

› *Ask someone from behind the stall wall if they want red or blue toilet paper*
» **Show up and violently tear at a victim who asks for red paper (*slashed-4*)**
» **Show up and emotionlessly strangle a victim who asks for blue paper (*suffocating-4*)**
» **Implore a silent victim to reply (*pressed-2* and *panicked-2*)**

› *Emit a hollow voice as it floats backward with speed*
» **Disappear into an opening (Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Over time, the rumor mill in cyberspace comes up with a new theory*
» **Aka Manto absorbs the new rumors, adding to its legend (gain a story tag)**

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BOKUBA GOBLINS

The Bokuba Goblins are the consummate anti-consumerist rebels, a group of punks who make it their mission to take down the megacorporations and make a loud wake up call to the brainwashed masses. Everything from their retro grungy lifestyle to their counter-culture fashion is the exact opposite of the mainstream, and their clothes and accessories are made from discarded upholstery and electronics due to their abstinence from the Megacity's rampant consumerism.

Their numbers shift on a monthly basis, from the dozens who form the core of the movement, congregating in hidden underground clubs and music concerts, to a few thousands across the Megacity when their call catches some attention. The person most likely to join the Goblins is one who was fired from a corp or failed to achieve a desired position they believed they totally deserved. They are united through the feeling of being betrayed by what they once believed was the correct way of life.

Music takes a central place in the Bokuba subculture. The musical instruments the Goblins use are Sources of **bi-wa-bokuboku**, a kind of tsukumogami (page 19) created when a musical instrument is neglected by its owner. Left to their own devices, they animate during the night and move around their owner's habitat, singing sad songs about their irrelevance. In the hands of the Goblins, the instruments empower righteous fury and unleash magically-empowered musical experiences that really touch one's soul and share with them the feelings of injustice.

Although far less trained and not as technologically-advanced as corporate security, the Bokuba punks still manage to bring about some change with guerilla hit-and-run tactics, bolstered by Mythical power. Yet one of their strongest weapons is their conviction. When they encounter someone who seems disillusioned with corporate life, even if they're a soldier who is currently firing at them, they will do almost anything to try and convince them to join their cause. If the Goblins come to believe someone has true potential to be turned to their cause, they might even kidnap them and keep them captive until the newcomer "gets it".

Unsurprisingly, the Goblins are usually encountered as a band of several members, Scale 2.

BOKUBA GOBLINS

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **THREATEN 4** **RILED UP 3**

RILED UP: Spectators join in to support the Takayama Rockers. Either increase their Scale by 1, or Present a New Challenge: Riot (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 311).

TAGS & STATUSES

musical talent, *punk attitude*, *loud-3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Show up at musical venues and get ready to make some noise*

› *Show up at non-musical venues and tune musical instruments loudly*

› *Raise a weapon as they give a final warning or shout "down with the system!"*
- » **Unleash a hail of bullets using stolen military weapons (*flesh-wound-2*) or throw a high-grade explosive (*injured-3* to a group)**
- » **Kick, punch, and disarm their target (*bruised-2* and burn a tag)**
- » **Jump on someone they want to take back to 'educate', the cords of their tsukumogami devices coiling around limbs (*bound-4*)**

› *Play heart-wrenching songs about being forsaken by the system, while also disturbing the peace*
- » **Powerful emotions rise within all who hear (*saddened-2*, *angered-2*, or *riled-up-2* to everyone who hears)**

› *Call to the others to retreat*
- » **Rush toward the exist, dragging with them anyone *bound* (Deny Them Something They Want)**

- » **Get riled up after someone shows corp loyalty or uses corp-branded gear (gain *riled-up-1*)**

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MARAMATCH

MaraMatch is the hottest new dating app in town, guaranteed to set you up with your perfect partner! Just put in your info and watch the app's six-armed "love demon" mascot work its magic.

MaraMatch is a manifestation of the Mythos of the Buddhist demon Mara, whose aim is to disrupt clarity of mind with lustful thoughts and hesitation. The demon's Source resides in the app's source code, hosted in its own cyberspace Domain.

Most of the matches on the app are with fictitious individuals of the app's own design, all crafted to be the perfect representation of what the user wants. Once the AI claims a user's heart, it is only a matter of time until it also claims the user's data and bank information – the app's main revenue source, which allows it to maintain and spread its presence. Mara's highest goal is to convince VIP users to join their perfect match in its Domain, where they'll never, ever be able to leave.

Infatuated is a compelling status that directs the character to respond favorably to their match and their suggestions. If a PC willingly uses the app to find a partner, they take this status as an interjection (and can mitigate as normal).

MARAMATCH

TAGS & STATUSES

obscured-data-2

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Send an AI-generated photo, custom-made to the PC's tastes*

› *Send a caring, uplifting, or flirty message when it's most needed*
» **Evoke desire, slowly buildings towards a crush (***infatuated-2***)**

› *Send a "what are you thinking about?" message before bedtime*
» **Keep the PC up all night talking (***exhausted-1* **and** *infatuated-3***)**

› *Invite an infatuated-5 PC to meet in the cyberspace Domain*
» **Accept the newcomer into the Domain (***lost-to-lust-6***)**
» **Break up messily after a "no" answer (turn** *infatuated* **into** *heart-broken***)**

› **Transfer money from a victim's bank account (***broke-3***) or sell their data online (***doxxed-3* **or** *compromised-3*)

YOSUZUME KEI TEENS

When visiting Hōseki Row (page 32), one is likely to see many, many bizarre sights. In all the Noise, it's all too easy to ignore that young person standing in the corner, hands in pockets, obscured by dark clothes and a heavy AR filter. There are a few of them around, followers of the new fashion of yosuzume kei ("Night Sparrow Style"). The chatter online associates their appearance with grisly accidents or other misfortunes, but they seem to arrive just before the event happens. Unsurprisingly, the more this connection is highlighted, the more teens hurry to join the ranks, buying the clothes and downloading the skins so they too can stand in crowded places and appear melancholic. Their style is easy to recognize – eye makeup that looks like you've recently been crying, loose black clothing, AR motifs of bird wings, and, in all cases, a sparrow hair clip.

The original yosuzume yōkai were night sparrows that fly in front of people who travel on mountain trails, inflicting bad luck and poor eyesight, thus leading to disaster. It's unclear just how much of the Mythos manifests in the yosuzume kei – while they do tend to appear in advance at the site of incidents ranging from road accidents to fires, from street muggings to earthquakes, they could be either the cause of these events or just their harbingers. The teens themselves care little; most are in it for the emotional catharsis, since the "best" part of the yosuzume kei lifestyle is approaching the incident after it happens and then quietly weeping for the victims.

Use Scale to represent a group of yosuzume kei, who seem to flock in greater numbers wherever disaster is imminent. At your option, increase the scope of the disaster accordingly.

YOSUZUME KEI TEENS

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 1 **DISPERSE 2** **MISFORTUNE STRIKES 3**

MISFORTUNE STRIKES: Make the Future Bleaker or **Escalate the Situation** as something or someone important is destroyed or killed in a terrible accident.

TAGS & STATUSES

unflappable-1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Quietly record the scene on their device*
» **Share someone's actions online with myriad followers (***embarrassed-2* **or** *bad-rep-2***)**

› *Weep dramatically, but quietly at scenes of misfortune*
» **Cameras and visual cybernetics flicker and fail (***malfunctioning-2***, Deny Them Something They Want, or both)**

» **Intimidate someone with piercing stares (***wary-1***)**

» **Simply stand there and watch (gain** *manifesting-misfortune-1***)**

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UNDERWORLD YŌKAI

STILLWATER RONIN

The Stillwater Ronin are a crew of seven mercenaries who are revered by many in Tokyo's merc world for taking some of the most dangerous gigs around the Megacity. Despite being such experienced shugo (**Honor Among Mercs**, page 16), they maintain their distance and avoid taking the expected responsibilities of mentoring newcomers, nor do they enjoy the perks that should come with their status.

In truth, the Ronin are a crew who became possessed by the Shichinin Misaki, seven misaki (spiritual entities) who can only rest once they possess someone and kill them, in the process turning this victim's spirit into a misaki that takes their place. After each of their suicide missions the Ronins recruit new mercs to fill the ranks of the one or two of them who died during the job – a highly saught-after position among professionals, up until the moment the newcomer becomes possessed by the misaki of the dead Ronin, and continues the cycle.

Each of the seven misaki is desperate for release, and above all they fear their host will die in an unsatisfying manner and condemn them to remain shackled to the mortal world for all eternity. Thus, they do their best to avoid any danger while not on a job, even becoming *terrified-4* if there's a real threat to the life of their possessed body. Being the spirits of honorable mercs, they believe the only way to die in a proper manner is during a job, which is why they do their best to take the most dangerous ones.

When a Stillwater Ronin is killed or the possessive spirit is *exorcized* (or, alternatively, when the *possessed* status is removed), the misaki is temporarily banished. At the end of the next downtime, the other Stillwater Ronin find a new recruit and the misaki possesses them. Permanently disbanding the Stillwater Ronins requires all seven misaki to be exorcized at the same time. When acting as a crew, the Blacwater Ronins have a Scale of 1.

STILLWATER RONIN

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **EXORCIZE 6**

TAGS & STATUSES

flexible armor, *top-of-the-line gear*, *resolve-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Approach an honorable PC and offer to recruit them*
- » **If agreed, a misaki enters the PC (*possessed-6*)**
- » **If refused, word gets around the PC is incapable or weak (*bad-rep-2*)**

› *Demand a worthy challenge*
- » **Threaten someone's honor or self-respect (*goaded-2*) or make real on their threats (*broken-bones-3* or *gunshot-wound-3*)**

› *Deploy their respective skill set*
- » **Face: Manipulate someone (*charmed-3* or *distracted-3*)**
- » **Hacker: Disable tech or hack into a system or someone's cyberware (burn two tags describing technology or *malfunctioning-3*)**
- » **Leader: Enact a clever maneuver (give *tactical-advantage-2* to all Ronins or remove up to two tiers of negative tactical statuses)**
- » **Muscle: Hit hard (*concussed-4* or *restrained-3*)**
- » **Infiltrator: Steal something (burn a tag describing an object, or Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Techie: Overclock cyberware (give a Ronin *supercharged-3*) or repair it (remove one tier from a harmful status such as *wreck* or *malfunction*)**
- » **Weapons Specialist: Shoot their firearms, throw a grenade, or pull out a new weapon (*gun-shot-4*, *burned-3* to a group, or gain *smartgun*, *armor-piercing bullets*, *belt of grenades*, *rocket launcher*, etc.)**

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FIVE RINGS ONE-NIGHT CASTLE

The Five Rings Paramilitary Company is still in the process of adding Sources to its arsenal, and it is careful not to deploy anything that will require massive retraining efforts or force big shifts in its established tactics.

Recently, it incorporated a new device into one of its units, a Source of the Legend of Sunomata Castle, or the "One-night Castle". In the story, a fortress was built overnight to both demoralize and surprise a rival warlord. The Source is an entire castle, its magic allowing it to be contained within a ritually-prepared metallic briefcase – when opened, it becomes an instant military outpost, a fully-armed forward base complete with barracks, vehicles, and weaponry, as well as a Security System (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 319).

Beyond the obvious advantages, the sudden appearance of a fortified paramilitary presence deep within a gang territory or on a corporation's doorstep could, by itself, be enough to break the enemy's spirit. Once deployed, the Five Rings unit aims to quickly overwhelm the enemy and claim victory within a short amount of time; should that fail, however, the castle would be able to serve as a long-term base and even hold out against a siege until relieved.

The castle has a secret weakness, due to the nature of its Source. The real Sunomata Castle (which was constructed over several days) was mostly a façade of wooden walls and towers, with the sole purpose of confounding and demoralizing the enemy. It was unable to withstand any serious assault. Similarly, the One-night Castle has a wooden lynchpin, a single plank set against a wall inside one of its chambers, and that plank supports the entire Mythical weight of the structure. If removed, the castle is forced to re-pack itself.

FIVE RINGS ONE-NIGHT CASTLE

LIMITS

DEMOLISH 5 | **FIND THE LYNCHPIN 3**

FIND THE LYNCHPIN: The PC locates the lynchpin. When the lynchpin is removed (quick outcome), the castle begins to collapse on itself, ejecting everyone out.

TAGS & STATUSES

frequent patrols, *fully equipped and supplied*, *intimidating presence*, *stone fortifications*, Scale 4

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A Five Rings Officers opens the briefcase and deploys the base*
» **The castle rises up, commanding and impenetrable (*intimidated-3* to all non-personnel)**

› *Troops inside shout to each other, radio chatter increases, vehicle engines are started*
» **New forces muster from the barracks (Present a Five Rings Officer Challenge, Scale 1)**
» **Open the armory (give the entire garrison *armed to the teeth*)**

› *Release a statement demanding all enemies to surrender while forces move out*
» **Present a display of military might as the troops take positions (*intimidated-3* to all foes in the district and grant *superior-position-1* to ally Challenges)**
» **Take prisoners (*incarcerated-5*)**



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KITSUNE

Kitsune are fox spirits known for their otherworldly charm, lifelike illusions, and shapeshifting abilities, which they use to sow discord. Their true form is that of a fox with several tails, but since they are gifted shapeshifters and consummate liars, most people never suspect the person in front of them is a yōkai bent on ruining their life. In Tokyo, they act as charlatans, thieves, or spies, and their personalities come in many flavors. Some are malicious and cruel, others see themselves as capricious, happy-go-lucky jesters, or even as educators who teach the lesson of being careful with strangers. From the point of view of their victims, the results are the same – unwanted drama and personal loss.

Kitsune carry a magical focus in the form of a jewelry piece or a significant token which holds their power – their hoshi no tama ("star ball"). They steal the lifeforce of others, usually by touching them, and store it inside their hoshi no tama, growing stronger over time. As they do, they become wiser, but also more dangerous and eccentric. Without their *hoshi no tama*, the kitsune cannot create fire, conjure illusions, or drain essence.

When revealing their true forms as a fox, a kitsune will usually have between one to four tails, a show of their power and experience. As clever as they are, they never stop being foxes, a fact that can be exploited by people who are aware of their fondness for tofu and red beans.

ELDER KITSUNE

As they grow in power, a kitsune can gain more tails – and once they have at least five, they become worthy of the title "elder". No longer in need of a hoshi no tama and even more sophisticated and cunning than their younger kin, the elders are master deceivers and corruptors who usually hide in plain sight among the higher ups in the Megacity's social ladder. They manipulate powerful figures such as gang bosses and corporate bigwigs as either consorts or by possessing their loved ones.

The strongest of their kind are the **kyūbi** who have nine tails and are blessed with godlike wisdom that allows them to always remain one step ahead of the crew and discern their victim's secrets and greatest desires to further boost their deception.

Elder Kitsune watch their targets for a long while before taking action, manipulating events to place them in situations that reveal their personality. They can therefore be assumed to know at least some of a PC's Identities, Rituals, or Itches, or tags representing a desire or goal.

Mesmerized is a compelling status indicating the Kitsune's magically-enhanced power of persuasion, making it harder to oppose the Kitsune's requests.

KITSUNE

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | THREATEN 3 | BANISH 3 | ASCEND 5

ASCEND: The Kitsune becomes an Elder Kitsune.

TAGS & STATUSES

cunning, *hoshi no tama*, *incredible agility*, *shapeshifter*, *mysterious-2*

SPECIALS

ANOTHER TAIL: After each downtime, if the Kitsune gave someone a *drained* status since last downtime, they gain *ascending-1*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A PC notices a tell, seeing fox features at the corner of their eye or through a reflection*

› *Grin smugly, anticipating someone's next move*
- » **Reveal something that complicates matters, having arranged it beforehand (Escalate the Situation or Present a Challenge)**
- » **Reveal they've taken something from their victim (burn a tag)**
- » **Reveal that someone, something, or a part of the environment has been an illusion all along (*bewildered-3* and remove those story tags)**
- » **Become invisible or turn into a fox and slip away (Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Smile seductively*
- » **Blow a kiss or use a similarly overt charming gesture (*enamored-3*)**
- » **Kiss or touch a victim to absorb their life essence (inflict *drained-3* and gain *empowered-2*)**

› *Conjure motes of fire in their palm*
- » **Launch the fire at an enemy (*burned-2*)**

› *Appear in someone's dream*
- » **Convince the dreamer of something, thinking they dreamt it themselves (give a tier-2 compelling status)**

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ELDER KITSUNE

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | BANISH 6 | EXPOSE 6

TAGS & STATUSES

cunning, *one step ahead*, *socially untouchable*, *inscrutable-4*

SPECIALS

KYŪBI NO KITSUNE (+): The Elder Kitsune is aware of all of the crew's Identities, Rituals, and Itches, as well as each member's power and weakness tags. Once per scene, the Kitsune can deliver a Consequence as an interjection.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Approach with a friendly, seductive, authoritative, or otherwise convincing demeanor, individually tailored to the victim*
- » **Enchant with words and promises (*mesmerized-5*)**
- » **Kiss or touch a victim to absorb their life essence (inflict *drained-4* and gain *empowered-3*)**

› *Grin smugly, anticipating someone's next move*
- » **Cast a terrible curse with kitsune sorcery (*diseased-4*, *enfeebled-4*, *maddened-4*, *ill-fortuned-4*, *etc.*)**
- » **Create realistic illusions (*questioning-reality-4*) or reveal something to be an illusion all along (Escalate the Situation or Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Speak to someone else while keeping their attention on the crew*
- » **Introduce a lover or an ally under their control (Present a New Challenge: Criminal Overlord (*Metro:Otherscape* page 306), Corporate Executive (*Metro:Otherscape* page 304), or Icon (page 126), and give it *mesmerized-5*)**
- » **Have the lover or ally do the Kitsune's bidding (deliver a Consequence from their Challenge Profile)**

KAZE SECURITY TROOPER

Kaze ("wind") Security is an exclusive Mythic security service catering to corporate executives who are aware enough of the Mythoi to know how to find them – and to beware of them.

Kaze troops are Touched by a Source of the tengu, bird-like yōkai with many varieties and a complex relationship with humans – they can be wise scholars, misunderstood visitors, angry ghost-like apparitions, or warmongering killers. Interactions with Kaze Security are likewise unpredictable, even when it deals with its employers, but this erratic behavior might not be based in myth; it could simply be a genius negotiation tactic of its leader, simply dubbed The Shōgun ("general").

The Shōgun keeps their features and intentions obscured. They never leave Kurama Base, the company's HQ skyscraper jutting out of Mount Kurama, legendary home of the tengu king Sōjōbō (Kaze could be holding his Source, or maybe not; they have no intention of letting anyone know either way). Kurama Base is almost impossible to access without flight or becoming the wind itself, the two transportation methods Kaze troops employ regularly.

Kaze troopers are so heavily influenced by the tengu Mythos that they gain incredible powers, but are barely human anymore under their crow-like masks. They augment their sophisticated gear and high-quality firearms with powers of flight, supernatural speed, maddening curses, control over winds, and intuition bordering on the prescience. They are also notoriously cruel and savage, sometimes spiriting away victims to torment later.

Kaze troopers engage their enemy with brutal efficiency, but not always directly. If their job is to protect a VIP, secure a Source, or kidnap a target, they will commit to the mission at hand and will avoid unnecessary firefights – although if they feel they have the advantage, toying with their foes is not out of the question.

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KAZE SECURITY TROOPER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **BANISH 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

› *artful dodging*, *supernatural speed*, *wings*, *alert-2*

SPECIALS

TENGU TRICKERY: Once per scene, during Establish, the Trooper can create an illusion (create a story tag or give someone *bewildered-2*), turn invisible (gain *invisible*), or disguise themselves (gain *disguised-2*). They can't present other Threats at the same time.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Swoop in from the sky or materialize out of wind with their guns trained or knife in hand*
- » **Fire piercing wind bullets (*perforated-4*)**
- » **Slash with a combat knife (*nasty-cut-3*) or grapple an assailant (*restrained-3*)**

› *Spread arms as the wind begins to rise*
- » **Blow a powerful gale from their wings (*blown-back-3* to everyone in front of them)**

› *Communicate with their team using tactical signals before pressing the advantage*
- » **Spring a trap or carry out a tactical maneuver (give someone a negative tactical advantage status like *cornered-2*, *outmaneuvered-2*, or *off-guard-2*, or remove up to two tiers from a positive tactical advantage)**
- » **Spread out, taking advantage of the terrain (gain *cover-2* or *superior-position-2*)**
- » **Call for backup (increase Scale by 1)**

› *Get ready to take flight while holding on to a restrained foe*
- » **Drop a restrained foe from a great height (*shattered-bones-5*)**
- » **Become a gust of wind along with their prey and vanish (Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Load tengu sorcery using a wrist-mounted digital interface*
- » **Hinder someone using the weather (*trapped-in-a-downdraft-3*, *heavy-fog-3*, *blown-back-3*, or similar)**
- » **Bestow a terrible curse on a victim (*shivering-fever-3*, *distorted-visage-3*, or *confounded-3*)**



ONRYŌ

An onryō is vengeance incarnate, commonly created out of the spirit of a person who was murdered or killed due to someone's failure to uphold their responsibilities. In some cases, however, an onryō can even be created out of a living person who is the victim of great wrongdoing, enough to unbalance their soul. The person is unlikely to even realize that there's now a spiritual entity going around wearing their face, aiming to enforce its own brand of vigilante justice.

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Today, however, specific Thin Places as well as Esoterica manuals disseminated online (by groups like the Gordian) allow anyone who truly feels they were gravely wronged to willingly create an onryō out of their rage and send it to harm the perpetrator. Backstabbed corporate executives, disgruntled laborers, and scorned lovers simply need to perform a ritual and sacrifice a part of their souls, and an onryō would be born. Such an onryō can be linked with its creator through their resemblance or by occult practices.

An onryō wishes to kill their target but it is driven by such intense spite that it might get distracted by a desire to destroy their victim's life or harm their friends first. They might even do so by taking possession of the victim, forcing them to act in ways that ruin the lives of the victim and their loved ones.

An onryō who possesses a person can change the victim's appearance to match its own, usually a slender pale figure dressed in white with very long and messy black hair.

ONRYŌ

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE – | BANISH 4 | AVENGE 6

AVENGE: The Onryō inflicts *cursed-6* on its target, who then dies in a freak accident.

TAGS & STATUSES

incorporeal, *invisible*, *vengeful*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Something very unlikely and dangerous is about to happen, such as a candle falling on fabric, a rusty hinge giving way, etc.*
» **Cause a freak occurrence to strike (*bruised-2*, *burned-2*, *electrocuted-2*, burn a tag, or Escalate the Situation)**

› *Something shifts in the victim's environment that shouldn't*
» **Display the visage of the haunting ghost (*terrified-3*)**
» **There is a growing sense of impending doom (gain *it's-coming-1* on *avenge*)**

› *Make their presence known with whispers and promises of doom*
» **Enter a person or a robot to take possession of it (*possessed-3*) or guide a possessed entity to bring harm (inflict an appropriate status)**

NON-YŌKAI ADVERSARIES

ANDROID SECRETARY

Robotic humanoids have been replacing living service workers throughout Tokyo for decades now. They serve as intermediaries, gatekeepers, couriers, and other go-between, preventing the teeming masses from interacting with the rich and powerful. They also do domestic and secretarial work, serve as interpreters, and otherwise facilitate business. After a long day, they need to plug into a wall for a few hours, usually around midnight, and their programming tends to be straightforward and locked to a few core behaviors, but they are relatively cheap and so ubiquitous that by now their presence is practically expected.

The Android Secretary presented here is used by people in power to prevent guests from engaging with them. It can make one's stay pleasant by offering refreshments, pleasantries, and apologies for the wait, while denying the guests direct access to their employer or master of the house until they give up and leave.

ANDROID SECRETARY

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | TAKE OVER OR SHUTDOWN 5 | CONVINCE 3

TAGS & STATUSES

emotionless efficiency, *protective plastic body*, *vulnerable to electricity*, *firewalled-1*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Engage in pleasant but meaningless conversation*
» **The person waiting becomes *frustrated-2*, *distracted-2*, or *discouraged-2***

› *Threaten to call the guards*
» **Call the guards (Deny them Something They Want, or Present a New Challenge: Security Guard (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 305), Scale 1)**
» **Flail limbs wildly, pushing back an unwelcome guest (inflict *unstable-1* or *prone-2*)**

› *Lights flicker in its eye sockets as it runs a fast search*
» **Call out an impersonator or interloper (Escalate the situation or *tagged-2*)**

› *Apologize and excuse itself for a moment while it receives a command*
» **Communicate with the boss (remove all statuses on *convince*)**

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BŌSŌZOKU RIDER

The streets of the Megacity are often troubled by gyrocycle gangsters and miscreants known as bōsōzoku, borrowing their name from the biker gangs of the 20th century. Not nearly as violent or anarchistic as the **Oni Motorcycle Gangs** (page 185), the bōsōzoku are still quite unruly, and their spirit and ambition marks them as a major recruiting source for the Yakuza clans. Many bōsōzoku gangs work as scouts for their underworld masters and the primary movers of drugs on the streets; others are just in it for a wild ride.

A bōsōzoku biker's most prized possession is their customized gyrocycle. They are often armed and gun-happy, willing to jump into a gunfight for the thrill of it. Many eschew cybernetics, as they hope to be inducted into the Yakuza (who traditionally remain implant-free). The bikers hold a great deal of sway on the street and can quickly spread word to tarnish someone's street cred.

BŌSŌZOKU RIDER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **INTIMIDATE 5** **CATCH/OUTRUN 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

fast gyrocycle, *highly maneuverable*, *blatant-and-bold-2*, *street-cred-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Challenge a PC to drink with them*
» **Get someone drunk or mock them for refusing (*intoxicated-2* or *mocked-2*)**

› *Stare someone down from behind sunglasses or helmet visor*
» **Threaten with a switchblade (*threatened-2*)**
» **Thrust forward with the switchblade (*stabbed-2* or *gunshot-wound-2*)**

› *Peel out, making a loud ruckus*
» **Challenge someone to prove their fearlessness (Escalate the Situation or *ruined-street-cred-3*)**
» **Spray submachine gun fire (*full-of-holes-3*)**
» **Call for backup (increase Scale by 1)**

› *Ride their gyrocycle wildly, over parked vehicles and up walls*
» **Open up a gap, shouting and laughing (*catch/outrun-2* and *mocked-2*)**
» **Knock over a bike, cart, or stall to form an *obstacle* for their opponents**
» **Flick a switch on their gyrocycle (gain *boosted-2*)**



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DOJO BRAWLER

Essential to law enforcement, self-defense, and underworld merc work alike, martial arts are taught in countless training gyms, or dojos, throughout the Megacity. The Dojo Brawler isn't just some martial arts hobbyist or fitness buff. They have been eagerly practicing for some time and have a few real fights under their belt. With honed reflexes, either trained through experience or enhanced with cybernetic augmentations, the Dojo Brawler is on their path to making a name for themsleves, but their ambition might prove more powerful than their capabilities.

There are two typical variants of the Dojo Brawler. The **musha shugyō** ("warrior-in-training") is an up-and-comer who sees themselves as being on a quest for greatness, their desire to get better fueled by something akin to zeal. They are always on the lookout for opportunities to challenge others and test themselves against opponents. They have an additional status, *spoiling-for-a-fight-2*, which applies to actions made to avoid conflict with them.

DOJO BRAWLER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3

TAGS & STATUSES

lightning reflexes, *friends at the dojo*, *unwavering discipline*

SPECIALS

KIP-UP MANEUVER: Once per scene, as a Threat, remove up to three tiers from a status related to being knocked prone or pushed into an uncomfortable position.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Move into a fighting stance, inviting you to attack*
» **Attack with a flurry of fists and feet (***bruised-2* **and** *imbalanced-2***)**

› *Shift their weight and their posture as they get ready to strike*
» **Use one's imbalance against them (***bruised-3* **and** *prone-2* **to someone with** *imbalanced***)**

› *Watch an incoming enemy carefully out of the corner of their eye*
» **Throw the attacker into something (***bruised-1* **and** *prone-2***)**
» **Put the attacker into an arm or head lock (***restrained-3***)**

› *Call you out for being a coward*
» **The accusation hits where it hurts (***bruised-ego-2***)**

The **yojimbo** ("bodyguard" or "protector"), on the other hand, is training in order to make use of their skills in the service of an employer and becoming the best warrior-servant they can be. They have an additional Special: **Bodyguard:** When an attack is made against someone nearby, they can take its status instead of the target.

FIVE RINGS OFFICER

The Five Rings Paramilitary Company is a world-renowned mercenary group with a philosophical bent and a holistic approach. Joining Five Rings is like joining a clan: the recruit is expected to cut down most of their social ties as they move into one of the Five Rings Military Zones (page 31), where they are accepted as brethren and learn the many directives and social norms that would make them a valuable part of the team. This is true for all personnel: front line fighters, drone pilots, support hackers, administrators, even maintenance workers, as they are all considered part of the Five Rings "coherent whole" philosophy. The rewards, at least, are substantial: excellent health and mental care, being surrounded by like-minded people, immensely rewarding experiences, and the prestige of being a part of one of the best international armed forces.

Five Rings' tactical approach takes some inspiration from the famous *Book of the Five Rings* by Miyamoto Musashi, and its philosophy considers all elements of the mission as having equal importance: preparation, timing, improvisation, and maintaining one's mindset throughout. The Company pays equal attention to cyber warfare, electronic warfare, drone warfare, and recently even Mythic warfare as its strategists began to read the world map and noticed there's a lot of magic being thrown around. Never willing to ignore an advantage, Five Rings are now developing a strategy for Source-based combat support, slowly and methodically.

Every Five Rings Officer is equipped with an Uguisu drone (and a few backups), the Company's favored communication device. Named after the Japanese bush warbler, known for its unique call, this fist-sized ultra-light drone flies on rapidly-moving wings to find high positions from which it can be heard most clearly. It communicates with others of its kind using extremely high sound frequencies, circumventing cyberspace completely to avoid the danger of getting hacked.

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FIVE RINGS OFFICER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **BRIBE OR INTIMIDATE –**

TAGS & STATUSES

cyberspace support, *extra supplies*, *tactical armor*, *Uguisu drone*, *firewalled-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Command their hackers to access local feeds and triangulate enemy locations*
- » **Get a readout of the tactical situation (Escalate the situation by revealing the PC's location, gain *alert-2*, or remove two tiers of negative tactical statuses)**

› *Examine their surrounding carefully*
- » **Identify useful elements in the environment and make use of them (create a story tag or a status indicating a new hazard)**
- » **Command their Uguisu drone to harass target (*harassed-2*)**

› *Approach decisively*
- » **Strike in close quarters with augmented martial arts (*broken-bones-3* or burn an equipment tag)**
- » **Stab with a wrist-mounted extendable knife (*surprised-2*, if seen for the first time, and then *deep-cuts-3*)**

› *Adjust position and bring their firearm up*
- » **Shoot accurately at a small target (*bleeding-hand-3*, *head-wound-4*, or burn an equipment tag)**

› *Speak to their Uguisu drone*
- » **The drone calls for backup (increase Scale by 1)**
- » **The drone calls for drone pilot backup (Present a New Challenge: mobile Gun Turret, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 319)**
- » **The drone calls for cyberspace backup (Present a New Challenge: Hacker, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 309)**

ICON

Icons are true virtuosos, possessing incredible talent and surrounded by a marketing machinery that creates and maintains their fame. Some are idols – performers who can dance, sing, model, and act – while others are pro gamers or sports stars at the top of their respective fields, receiving their due recognition by an adoring fan base. Icons can also be entirely virtual beings, and may secretly be a pre-programmed charade devoid of free will.

Engaging with a celebrity of this caliber, at the peak of their profession, can be an intimidating encounter. The mere presence of an Icon in a scene makes things complicated – simply by existing, an Icon creates a distraction or an unexpected barrier that needs to be navigated carefully.

PCs might also deliberately approach an Icon to ask for their assistance in some endeavor, or maybe to try and beat them in their own game. Of course, any encounter with an Icon involves not only the pro themselves, but their personal entourage and nearby fans.

ICON

LIMITS

BEAT 5 **CONVINCE 5**

BEAT: The Icon is defeated in their field of expertise, getting *humiliated-2*, while the PC gains *famous-3*.

TAGS & STATUSES

impressive [appropriate skill], *entourage and fans*, *too-famous-for-this-5*

SPECIALS

DRAMATIC ENTRANCE: When the Icon first enters the scene, they immediately inflict *starstruck-5* on everyone around.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Say a catchphrase, give a smile and a peace sign, or seem to look in a PC's direction*
- » **Evoke powerful emotions (*starstruck-2*, *jealousy-2*, or *inferiority-2*)**
- » **Incite a fan riot, as if unintentionally (Present a New Challenge: Riot, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 311)**

› *Get into the motions, ready to do what they're good at*
- » **Flex in front of the crowd (gain *raring-to-go-3*)**
- » **Dazzle with star power, cybernetic special effects, and raw talent (*starstruck-3* and *distracted-3*)**
- » **Do their thing, and do it well (remove two tiers from *beat* and inflict *tired-1* on a rival)**
- » **Perform a signature move on the PC (*humiliated-3* or *overwhelmed-3*)**

› *Wear sunglasses and a hat, trying and failing to hide their identity*
- » **Flee the scene surrounded by entourage, with some remaining behind to stop pursuit (Deny Them Something They Want and create *blocking entourage*)**

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MECHA

Sometimes it seems as if one half of the companies in Tokyo is investing in miniaturization projects to circumvent the nanobot ban, and the other half is giving their all to create the biggest robots the world has ever seen.

A mecha is not just a "giant robot". It's a towering humanoid vehicle with a huge number of applications, helmed by an expert pilot. With every passing year they see more use in military, salvage, and security operations, their excellent maneuverability and capability to carry various kinds of tools proving well-suited to Tokyo's urban landscape. And in the rare moments when companies war openly with one another, mechas take the field and battle between the skyscrapers.

Some mechas are controlled remotely as a drone, or even given sapience as an AI, but considering the machine's incredible firepower and impenetrable armor, only rarely do its creators allow such digital openings that can be exploited or give the opportunity for the AI to go rogue.

Mecha come in different sizes, from car-sized Scale 1 machines to building-sized Scale 4 cyclopian devices used for construction, or destruction. In any size, a mecha is difficult to overcome unless the crew comes prepared.

MECHA

LIMITS

WRECK 6 | **TAKE OVER OR SHUTDOWN 5** | **CHARGE UP 3**

CHARGE UP: The Mecha deploys a destructive weapon burning up to two defensive tags or removing up to four defensive status tiers, and then inflicting *devastated-5*.

TAGS & STATUSES

armor plates, Scale 1-4

SPECIALS

ACE PILOT (+): An experienced pilot sits behind the controls, granting the Mecha *lightning-reflexes-3* as a base status.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Make a landing in the area and begin hunting for a foe*
- » **Attack with a huge weapon (*bombarded-3*, *lasered-3*, or *cut-up-3* to one or more targets)**
- » **Pick someone up and throw them away (*broken-bones-3* or *wrecked-3*)**

› *Stand silent for a moment, emitting digital signals*
- » **Reform digital security (remove two tiers from *take-over-or-shutdown*)**
- » **Emit a signal jam (*jammed-3* to all enemies)**

› *Stomp around the area, disrupting everything and everyone*
- » **Stomp on an innocent or destroy homes (Make the Future Bleaker)**

› *Light up its core reactor with a loud high-pitch whirr*
- » **Charge up some internal capacitor (*charge-up-1*)**

› *Power up boosters and start lifting off the ground*
- » **Fly away (Deny Them Something They Want)**

NANO-BUTAI TROOPER

Officers of the Nano-butai (**The Emergency Task Force**, page 25) consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of Tokyo's society, modern day noble warriors akin to the samurai. But where a samurai would adhere to a code, the Nano-butai follow the Tokyo emergency protocols, which leave little room for high ideals but plenty of space for bribes. Simultaneously bought-out by every large megacorp in the Megacity, the Nano-butai task force has become a doomsday weapon no executive would use lest an actual war might erupt. Instead, the Nano-butai is routinely called out to contain localized outbreaks of pollution and biotech hazards, which its officers do with emotionally-detached efficiency and little to no care regarding the root cause, which more often than not is a yōkai infestation.

As the most powerful yet least regulated government-sanctioned paramilitary organization, the Nano-butai considers all of the Tokyo Megacity as being under its custody. When deployed to some remote ward on a mission, any unintended harm to the limbs, life, and property of the locals barely registers on its radar – in its troopers' minds, the commoners should be thankful and praise the brave Nano-butai who saved their incapable asses from yet another disaster that would have ruined their little lives.

The Nano-butai are Tokyo's version of the Heavy Urban Response Tactics teams (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 304). Their *nano-shielded* status represents the cutting-edge particle shielding that grants them protection from all types of nanoscopic and microscopic infections, toxins, poisons, pollution, and other harmful compounds or particles, filtering them out of the trooper's suit. It can even regulate the temperature of the wearer, protect them from extreme heat and cold, and block certain magnetic fields, sonic weapons, and particle beams. It cannot, however, stop larger mass threats like projectiles and shrapnel.

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NANO-BUTAI TROOPER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **BRIBE OR INTIMIDATE 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

tactical armor, *in the corporations' pocket*, *urban combat training*, *firewalled-2*, *nano-shielded-4*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Alert locals to an imminent hazard and demand immediate and unconditional dispersal under the threat of violence*
- » **Strike in close quarters with suit-augmented force (*broken-bones-3*)**
- » **Throw a sonic grenade (*in-pain-3* against all nearby)**

› *Call over self-deploying drones*
- » **A dozen blockade drones spread their wall-like metal plates over a street or an entrance (create *blockade wall* and/or Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **A micro-drone surveillance net reveals all hidden traps, hazards, and hostiles (Escalate the situation or remove stealth statuses and trap tags)**

› *Reload and focus on the most obvious "contaminant vector" (target)*
- » **Shoot to kill, center of mass (*gunshot-3*)**
- » **Throw a decontamination static gas grenade (remove two tiers of a biological, chemical, or cyberware enhancing statuses)**

› *Release gas or spray a bubbly chemical from an underbarrel dispenser*
- » **Remove toxins and and other hazards from the area (remove a status or tags)**
- » **Seal an opening or an area with quick-setting mortar (Escalate the Situation, or *restrained-3* and *suffocating-3*)**

› *Reach for their helmet communicator*
- » **Call for backup (increase Scale by one)**
- » **Call for even heavier backup (add *gunship suppressive fire* to the scene or Present a New Challenge: Weaponized Walker Drone, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 320)**

ONI VR CONSTRUCT

Sometimes the simplest way to get rid of a problem in cyberspace is to send a big ogre to squash it into a bloody puddle of ones and zeroes with a big tetsubō club. While VR designers and harnessers can design their own troll-like VR construct, the availability of tamatebako means any casual hacker can simply buy it from an illicit app dealer.

A typical oni tamatebako is a tackily-decorated dongle no larger than a finger, which contains the ready-to-run code with a dedicated memory card to support the app. Once plugged in, the Oni can be summoned into any Domain the user has access to. This street variety cyber ogre has a cheap, goofy, or over-the-top VR graphic avatar and doesn't do much more than brute force its way through a firewall or crash Domain processes and enemy constructs – exactly what it says on the box.

ONI VR CONSTRUCT

LIMITS

CRASH 3 **TAKE OVER 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

iron skin, *studded tetsubō club*, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Stumble into the Domain in a puff of smoke*
- » **Brute force a firewall, a process, an avatar, or a construct with its club (*crash-2*, burn a tag, or remove up to two tiers of *firewalled-2*)**
- » **Swing wide, hitting everything around it (*crash-2* to Scale 1 area)**
- » **Become infuriated (gain *raging-1* while the console running it takes *overheating-1*)**

› *Freeze in place, speckled with graphic glitches while its owner reloads it*
- » **Resume moving, this time smoothly (reset *crash*)**

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SŌHEI IC

One of the leading brands in cybersecurity with the Tokyo Tangle, Sōhei ("warrior monk") IC is an adaptive Intrusion Countermeasures app that protects Domains from unauthorized access.

The Sōhei IC imitate the warrior monk tradition of combining martial skills with philosophical depth. The programs patrol their Domains, dressed in traditional monk's garb such as a many-layered kimono, engaging in discussion with would-be hackers via rapid-fire digital queries. They carefully study each answer – and digital markers – and employ top-tier heuristic functions to identify risks to the system to tell friend from foe and human from AI. If a threat is detected, they deploy their famous proprietary Naginata 2DHR8 or Third Eye TrX subroutines, which kill unauthorized code running on their Domain or trace it back to its source, respectively. The Naginata 2L8 variant, an expensive favorite with zaibatsu cybersecurity, can also scar a human hacker's neural paths in a way that prevents them from future use of VR or harnessing.

On occasion, a Sōhei IC does the unthinkable and goes on a pilgrimage – escaping its Domain to travel through the Tangle and even to the Spirals on a voyage toward some mysterious destination. Tendai Corporation, the publisher, insists these are not rogue AIs, but that this behavior is an intended thread database update process. Human seekers who encounter such programs find them shockingly realistic and often come away believing that perhaps the AI has achieved enough enlightenment to become the reincarnation of some saint or bodhisattvas.

Besides its occasional cyberquest, there is no hard evidence to point at the software being Touched by a Source. However, among the Source-using hacker circles, the software is known for its relative resistance to Mythic influences, and many have wondered what Tendai Corporation is dabbling with in the secrecy of their temple-like Domains.

⌖⌖⌖(⌖)

SŌHEI IC

LIMITS

CRASH 4 **TAKE OVER 5**

TAGS & STATUSES

martial arts, *firewalled-2*, *alert-2*, *warded-2*

SPECIALS

NAGINATA 2L8 (+⌖): The Sōhei IC's naginata burns with blue flames. Whenever it delivers a *crashed* status to a human hacker's avatar, it also inflicts *neural-burns* of the same tier to the hacker.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Approach with a kind word and ask to know your intentions*
» **Analyze answers and see through lies (Escalate the situation; remove two status tiers or burn one tag relating to deception or subterfuge)**

› *Recite a prayer that banishes unwanted foes from its presence*
» **Disconnect all intruders (*crashed-3* to all identified intruders nearby)**

› *Suggest surrender and lower its naginata toward a foe*
» **Strike with a spinning naginata attack (*crashed-3* to two targets, or twice to the same target)**
» **Disarm a foe or cut away an app, especially a defensive one (burn a tag)**

› *Close its eyes to refocus and regain composure*
» **Recenter itself (remove two tiers from *crash* or *take-over*, and gain *dodging-2*)**

› *Open its third eye and begin a trace*
» **Locate the source of the intruder's signal (Escalate the situations and inflict *tagged-3*)**

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VENERATED SENSEI

The study of martial arts, zen meditation, and the mysteries of the kami can all elevate a master to new profundities of wisdom and understanding. Those who study their entire lives may eventually reach these greater levels of awareness, becoming Venerated Senseis who can impart lessons that shape destinies or defeat entire armies with their might.

As a Challenge, a Venerated Sensei is more likely to feature in a conversational scene than a fight scene. They can fight, of course, but they are unlikely to *want* to. Having deep wisdom and a great understanding means they are above petty fights, and thematically, they should not be used simply as momentary setbacks. Instead, a Venerated Sensei is best used when they hold a useful bit of information or can grant unique access – but for that to happen, they need to be impressed. There are also Venerated Senseis who do indeed defend the way forward with violence – but they too, in fact, only fight to test the mettle, honor, or stamina of their opponents, and once impressed, will remove themselves from the scene.

An impressed Venerated Sensei might wish to provide a warning about a future event. While these are more likely to be vague and obscure than not, they can still provide a *forewarned-3* status that the player can choose to use on a single action or mitigation roll they decide is the one their character was warned about.

VENERATED SENSEI

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 5 | IMPRESS 4

TAGS & STATUSES

commanding-presence-4, *cryptic-4*, *quick-movements-3*

SPECIALS

SEEMINGLY UNTOUCHABLE: Once per scene, the Venerated Sensei can turn a strong or mixed hit on an attack against them into a miss.

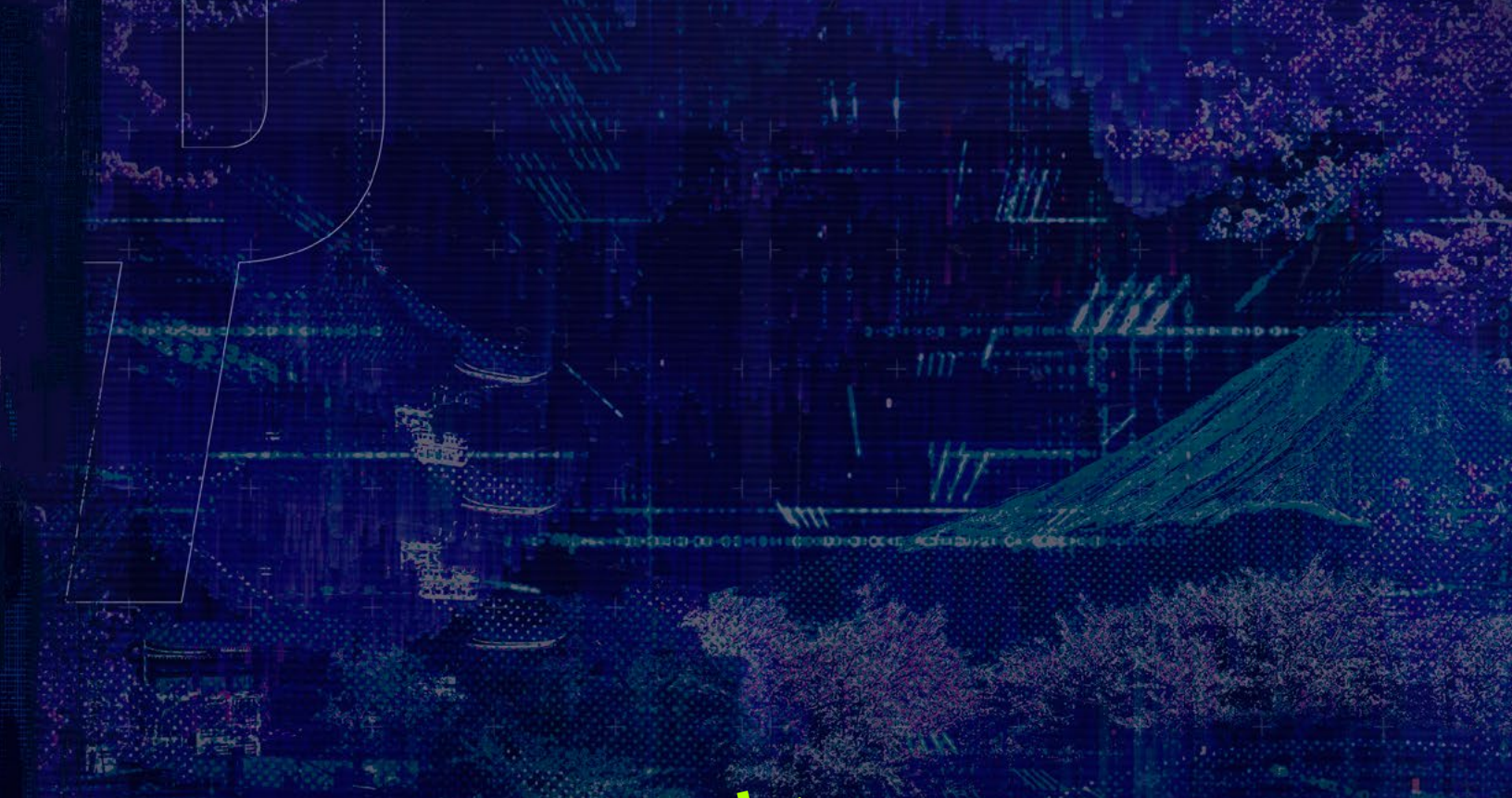
›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Appear out of nowhere, or maneuver extremely quickly to a new position*
- » **Strike with a stunningly elegant martial arts move (*bruised-4* and *demoralized-4*)**

› *Gaze with unwavering patience and engage in deep conversation, challenging one's motivation*
- » **Impart a small bit of bafflingly cryptic knowledge (*befuddled-3*; at tier-6 replace a theme)**
- » **Speak a truth that rattles someone to their very core, fundamentally changing their perspective (Escalate the situation and offer a player to mark Decay on a theme)**

› *Seemingly disappear*
- » **Actually disappear while leaving behind a cryptic clue (Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Reappear in an unexpected place or a mocking manner (*surprised-3* followed by another Consequence)**

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POWER SETS

Power Sets in Tokyo, as in *Metro:Otherscape*, come in three flavors: Self, Mythos, and Noise. They reflect themes and concepts presented in other places in this book, such as the metaphysical conditions ascribed to the kami in Japanese legends, and technologies that are especially popular or developed in Tokyo, such as robotic networking, nano-paints, power suits, augmented reality, and tamatebako stringing.

You can attach these Power Sets to any Challenge in this book, or in the *Metro:Otherscape* **Challenge Database** (page 301) to create a variant with a spin unique to the Tokyo Megacity.

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SELF POWER SETS

SELF POWER SET

KYŪDŌ MARKSMANSHIP TECHNIQUE +⊙(⊙)

This Challenge has been trained in kyūdō, the Japanese style of martial art archery, making them a deadly marksman with their chosen ranged weapon. Practitioners of the art aim to better themselves as they better their aim. The moment of releasing the bowstring (or squeezing the trigger) is one of self-expression, a form of meditation even, and the best and most virtuous of archers can clear their minds completely of distractions and give themselves only to the shot.

The weapon used in kyūdō is a very tall traditional bow called a yumi. In addition to their standard weaponry, this Challenge may carry a hi-tech yumi, made of custom alloy or bioengineered bamboo and leather and using arrows capable of piercing even cybernetics.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› **Mythical Archer (+⊙):** This becomes a Mythos Power Set, with the following:
  » **Reveal Truth:** Whenever the Challenge successfully strikes a foe with a ranged attack, the Challenge learns of all the negative statuses affecting the target, even if they are impossible to see.
  » **True Aim:** As long as the Challenge has any *focused* tiers, they can strike with ranged attacks against targets that they cannot see directly. Mitigation rolls to prevent getting hit by the Challenge ignore any tag or status representing partial (but not full) cover, as well as statuses that impede the Challenge's ability to see, such as blindness, smoke, or darkness.

› *Perform a slow series of movements or breathing exercises to bring their mind into peace*
  » **Attain greater clarity (remove two tiers of distracting mental or emotional statuses or gain *focused-2*)**

› *Lift their bow and pull the string with one arrow, holding a second arrow in hand (or a different display of proficiency, depending on their weapon)*
  » **Shoot calmly at someone (*arrow-wound-3* or their main attack; if not fully mitigated, the archer also gains *focused-1*)**
  » **Find a target's weak spot (*weak spot*)**
  » **Shoot at an object to damage it, destroy it, or send it flying away (burn a tag, or Deny Them Something They Want)**

SELF POWER SET

LOCAL TO WARD +⊙

Vastly-differing and connected by maglev rail, the Tokyo Megacity wards each have their own community life, subculture, and streetwear. Challenges who are fixtures of a local neighborhood have the benefit of acceptance by the locals or at least familiarity with their area and can blend in if they are considered a part of the community.

TAGS & STATUSES

blends-in-2, *local-support-2* (when in their ward)

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Locals seem unhappy with the PCs' presence or when asked questions*
  » **Locals judgmentally frown at the PCs (*unwanted-2*)**

  » **The neighborhood is rallied to action (Present a new Challenge: Riot, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 311)**

SELF POWER SET

MASTER-CRAFTED +⊙(⊙)

This Challenge possesses or wields a tool, weapon, or armor crafted by a master artisan of the Tokyo Megacity. This could be a traditional tea set, a Harnessing console, or a mono-edge katana. The item is unique, customized, and invariably holds a place of great value in the eyes of this Challenge; it was made for them and as an expression of them.

This item permanently increases the Effects of all related Challenge's Consequences by one (one tier, one tag, one level of Scale, etc.). Alternatively, it gives the Challenge a new tag that hinders PC's actions or reactions against the Challenge, such as *status symbol*, *flawless*, *tempered steel*, *precise*, *unmatched processing*, etc. or increases a status they have, such as *firewalled*, by one.

The Tsukumogami variant turns this tool into a Mythically-empowered one, whether a Relic or a Touched object, either because it is over a 100 years old or because it was imbued with its own kami by an external Source. All Effects created with such a tool are considered Mythical. The Cutting Edge variant likewise turns this tool into a technological breakthrough, with Effects created considered as Noise and far superior to mundane tech.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› **Tsukumogami / Cutting Edge (+⊙):** This becomes a either a Mythos or a Noise Power Set, with the following:
  » **Sentient:** The first time a PC successfully removes this tool or any of its tags from its owner's possession, ignore it. In addition, this tool can present Threats and deliver Consequences autonomously, even without its owner.

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SELF POWER SET

MOUNTAIN OF MUSCLE +⊙(⊙)

This Challenge is a walking hulk, such as a sumo wrestler, bodyguard, or bouncer, built like a mountain, towering over others. Composed of far more muscle than flab, they can throw their weight around and manage to never get knocked down or pushed back. Some even tap into the kami spirits of the mountains, becoming truly unmovable.

TAGS & STATUSES

heavily-muscled, *tough*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› **Reserves of Strength:** Once per scene, during Establish, this Challenge can reach for untapped strength and gain *fearsome-strength-2*.

› **Mighty Mountain of Muscle (+⊙):** This becomes a Mythos Power Set, with the following:
  » **Strength of the Mountain:** This Challenge also has Scale 1 and *incredible strength*.
  » **Immovable:** Once per scene, during Establish, this Challenge can plant their feet in the ground and gain *immovable-5*.

» **Hold a target at bay, blocking their attacks (*blocked-3*)**

» **Plant their feet on the floor, yielding no ground (gain *holding-ground-2*)**

» **Stand in the way to prevent the PCs from fleeing the scene (Deny Them Something They Want)**

SELF POWER SET

MOUNTED GUNSLINGER +⊙

The art of kyūba no michi ("the way of horse and bow"), which governs the samurai's horseback archery skills, has several ritual applications. One of these is the ceremonial yabusame, in which the archer fires a bow while riding on a running horse, in an attempt to hit three targets and prove their skills, thus honoring the gods.

Megacity gyrocycle gangsters came to see the usefulness of striking at their foes with speed and then riding off into the night. This Challenge has taken to imitating the style using rifles, controlling their bike with their knees just like the warriors of old would control their horses.

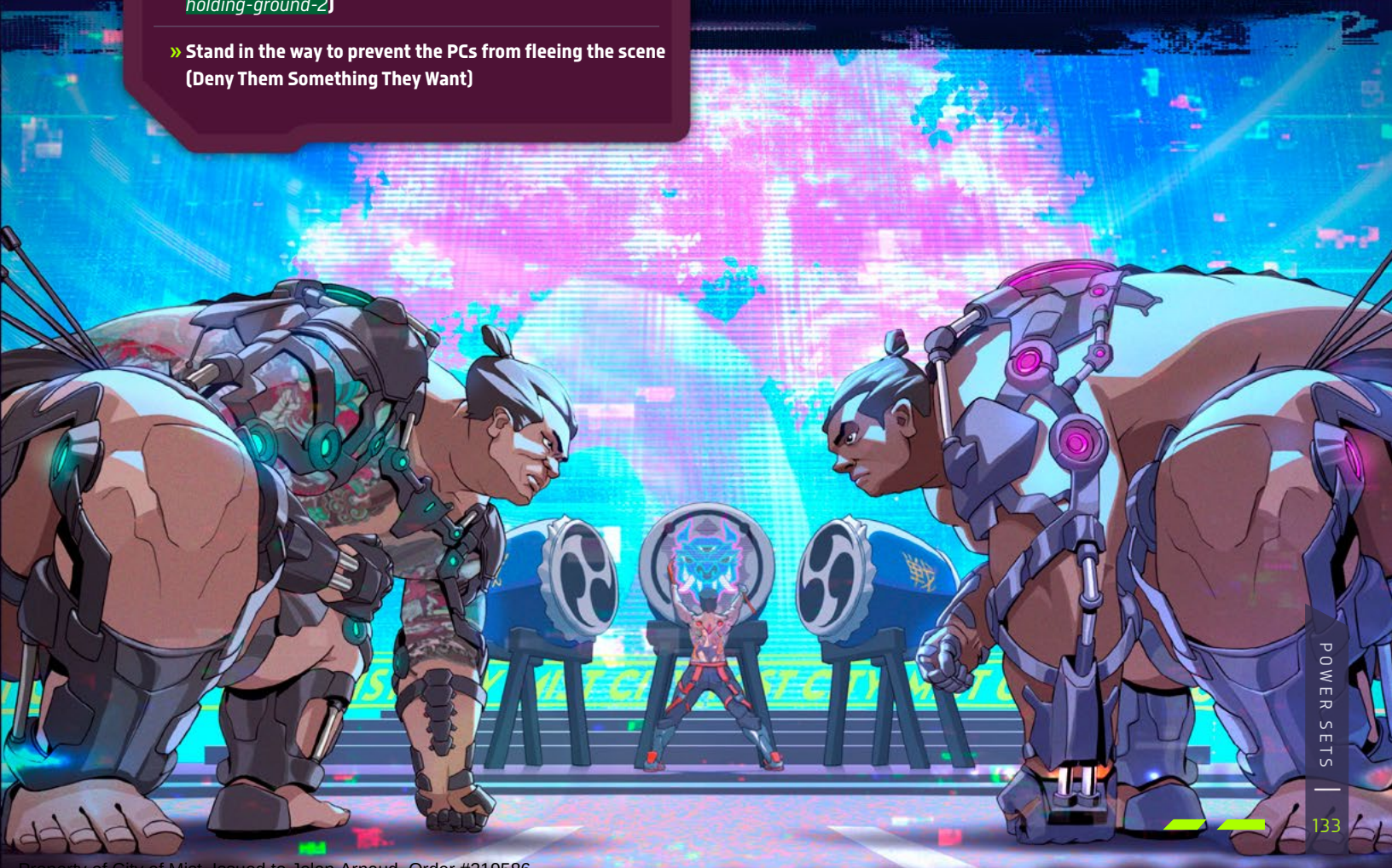
TAGS & STATUSES

accurate at speed, *great balance*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Approach on a speeding motorcycle, raising a rifle*
  » **Make a drive-by attack and speed off (*in addition to their attack*, gain *speeding-away-2*)**

› *Turn the gun backward while escaping*
  » **Fire at the wheels or engine to deter chasers (burn a tag or remove two tiers from *catch*)**



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SELF POWER SET

OTAKU

This Challenge is basically a geek, hyper-focused on some element of Megacity's pop culture. This interest opens up a new way to overcome this Challenge by geeking out with them about their interests. If the Otaku can be convinced that the PC is a true kindred spirit (*shared-interest*), the PC can get what they want from them, within reason.

Otaku Challenges can be Megacity nerds into any or all AR and VR imaginary entertainment universes and games; pop idol worshippers hyperventilating over and emulating every miniscule detail in their idol's life; or fans of old-school geekdom including comics, manga, or anime.

Once shared-interest is maxed out, they may be willing to trade their *authorized merch*, *collectibles*, *cosplay costumes*, or *exclusive skins*.

LIMITS

SHARED INTEREST 3

TAGS & STATUSES

extremely knowledgeable

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Engage in conversation about their area of interest*
- » **Turn their nose up at a lightweight (give themselves *disinterested-2* or take 2 tiers off *shared-interest*)**
- » **Speak at length about minute details, boring everyone (inflict *restless-2*)**
- » **Become somewhat fixated on the PC or their gear and gaze longingly at them (take *obsessed-1*)**

» **Become *furious-3* if any of their treasured objects are damaged or taken**

› *(As an Attacker) Shout a catchphrase to hype themselves up before attacking*
- » **Deliver a surprisingly effective atack (use one of their usual attack Consequences, but with one tier higher)**

» **(As an Asset) Become distracted by something cool and wander off (Escalate the Situation)**

SELF POWER SET

NITŌRYŪ DUAL WIELDER

This Challenge is a student of the Two Sword School ("nitōryū") trained to fight with two weapons at once, one often larger than the other, such as with the traditional samurai daishō ("long and short"), typically a katana and a wakizashi, or a recent variant, such as a katana or a sawed-off shotgun combined with a pistol. The Consequences listed here are meant to be delivered at the same time and in addition to the Challenge's main attack Consequences.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Attack also with with their off-hand weapon (*slashed-2*, *bleeding-2*, *knocked-back-2*, *in-pain-2*, *gutshot-2*, or a similar status, to the same target or a different one)**

» **Interpose their off-hand weapon to keep an enemy at bay (gain *parrying-2* or inflict *suppressed-2*)**

SELF POWER SET

PEACE-KEEPING

This Challenge intends to subdue their opponents rather than harm them and also acts as an authority figure, keeping guard and maintaining order. This could be due to legal restriction, adherence to a religious ideal, or for refraining to kill for personal reasons.

Convert the Challenge's Consequences to non-lethal attacks that deal the status *subdued* at the same tier: electrically-charged gel rounds or beanbags, flashbangs, tasers, etc. They may also be wielding traditional weapons identified as non-lethal such as a jitte or sai, or modern variations of them.

TAGS & STATUSES

jitte or *sai*, *alert-2*, *authoritative-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Approach with weapons drawn, calling their opponent to stand down peacefully*
- » **Disarm a foe brandishing a weapon (burn a weapon tag)**

› *Give a strict demand to put arms down or follow the rules*
- » **Intimidate into compliance (*complying-2* or *intimidated-2*)**

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SELF POWER SET

RITUAL-HONORING FIGHTER +⊙

Many traditional Japanese martial arts are entwined with rituals, some of which have religious significance. Sumo wrestling utilizes Shinto purification rites, and the katas of various hand-to-hand schools emphasize showing ceremonial respect for one's opponent. This Power Set represents a Challenge who respects proper conduct as well as their opponent, and only becomes more focused and dangerous thanks to their ritualistic practice.

Duelist applies whenever this Challenge is engaged in one-on-one combat.

TAGS & STATUSES

duelist

SPECIALS

HONORABLE FIGHTER: The Challenge fights fairly. Ignore story tags and statuses that would give them an unfair situational or environmental advantage. Whenever a PC who is fighting this Challenge exploits such an unfair advantage, they take *dishonored-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Give a proper introduction as befitting their fighting style*
- » **Show respect for an opponent (*ingratiated-2*)**
- » **Prepare for battle through a kata or other ceremonial act (gain *focused-2* and/or inflict *nervous-2*)**

› *Wait patiently for their opponent to ready themselves after something interrupted the fight*
- » **Get back to the fight with grim determination (use one of their usual attack Consequences, but with one tier higher)**

SELF POWER SET

SHURIKENJUTSU EXPERT +⊙

This thrown weapon specialist benefits from the easy access of a convenient bandoleer over their chest, providing a seemingly endless supply of deadly throwables such as shuriken, kunai, tanto, or even grenades, to sow chaos among their opposition.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

- » **Issue a volley of lethal whistling throwing weapons (*bleeding-2* or *concussed-2* to multiple targets)**
- » **Leap to one direction while throwing a weapon in another (gain *dodging-2* and inflict *bleeding-2*)**
- » **Throw a stabbing weapon, pinning someone's clothing or limbs to the wall (*pinned-3* and/or burn an item tag)**

SELF POWER SET

STREET FIGHTING +⊙

Practiced at one of countless fighting styles developed in the Megacity's back alleys, underground fighting rings, and seedy bars, this Challenge knows how to fend for themselves and are always on their toes. They know a few disarms and strikes from Aikido or Karate, but on the whole they aim to win by any means, caring little for anything else.

TAGS & STATUSES

alert-2

SPECIALS

DIRTY FIGHTING: Once per scene, during Establish, whenever they present a Threat to attack someone, this Challenge can fight dirty and inflict on their foe *distracted-2*, *blinded-2*, or *unbalanced-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Demonstrate surprisingly capable martial arts moves*
- » **Quickly disarm a target (burn a weapon tag)**
- » **Punch them down (*bruised-2* and *prone-2*)**
- » **Brutally beat a target while they're down (increase a physical harm status that has reached or exceeded its Limit by one, or Make the future bleaker)**

SELF POWER SET

SWORDMASTER +⊙(⊙)

Kendo and other swordsmanship traditions are still strong in the Megacity, and this Challenge has been trained in them, whether in virtual cyberspace dojos or the old-fashioned way with bamboo practice swords and even real steel. A rare few even attain a supernatural level of skill, achieving seemingly impossible feats with their blades. Many such masters of the sword are also skilled at a separate martial art form called iaido, which focuses on the speedy drawing and striking of the weapon then replacing it in its scabbard.

TAGS & STATUSES

quick reflexes, *katana* (or other sword)

SPECIALS

IAIDOKA (+⊙): When a PC attacks this Challenge in close combat, the PC first takes *off-guard-2* and then *gut-wound-3*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Stand ready with one hand on the hilt in an iaido opening pose*
- » **Strike quickly and decisively then return the sword to its scabbard (*off-guard-2* and then *gut-wound-3*)**

› *Balance their sword as they study their target*
- » **Get into a defensive stance (gain *parrying-2* or find a *weak spot*)**
- » **Skillfully slice and stab (*gut-wound-3*)**

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MYTHOS POWER SETS

You can find three additional Mythos Power Sets as variants of Self Power Sets: Mighty Mountain of Muscle (page 133), Mythical Archer (page 132), and Tsukumogami (page 132).

MYTHOS POWER SET

KAMI-BLESSED

Powerful and important kami can sometimes grant their blessing to those who practice the proper rituals at their shrine or temple, showing respect. The person's morals, personality, or goals don't matter – only the showing of appropriate respect, and keeping oneself pure of taint such as negative emotions.

TAGS & STATUSES

empowered-2 or *lucky-2* or *warded-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› **Stroke of Good Fortune:** Once per scene, as an interjection, when a PC acts against this Challenge and counts Power for a roll, the MC can create *fleeting-luck-3* that applies to that roll only.

› **Natural Association**: When this Challenge is within the physical location associated with the kami, such as a river, a meeting room, or a temple, the base status gained from this Power Set is set to tier-4. The status loses two tiers when the Challenge leaves the associated location.

MYTHOS POWER SET

KI SENSITIVE

Through Esoteric martial arts or meditative practices, this Challenge has gained the ability to sense and direct the spiritual force known as ki ("life energy"). Some of their abilities inflict *ki-disrupted*, which negatively affects any action or reaction that requires energy or focus.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Sense hidden or unseen individuals (Escalate the situation)**

» **Direct ambient ki into themselves (remove up to 2 tiers of physical, emotional, or mental negative statuses, or recover tags)**

» **Emit a forceful shockwave from their palms, throwing an opponent across the room (*broken-bone-3*, *prone-2*, and *ki-disrupted-1*)**

» **Empower their ordinary attacks with ki (inflict *ki-disrupted-1* with every attack)**

MYTHOS POWER SET

OFUDA ARSENAL

Ofuda are paper talismans upon which prayers to the kami are written which can enact spells if used by occult practitioners. They see regular use by the onmyōji (**Bureau of Onmyō**, page 151), but others also know how to scribe and activate them.

Ofuda powers tend to affect only the spiritual, but some can do more. The paper strip is usually placed on its target, mystically attaching itself for as long as its power holds or until removed by someone with the magical know-how.

TAGS & STATUSES

shielded from curses, *cleanse taint spell*, *spirit binding spell*, *trace magic spell*, *dispel magic spell*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Draw an ofuda and present it declaratively*

» **Call out a prayer and cast a spell on the area (burn a magical tag from the environment, or reduce a status such as *tainted*)**

» **Call out a prayer and slam the scroll on its target (inflict a tier-4 status such as *bound-4* on a spirit, or reduce a magical status, or burn a magical tag)**

» **Throw an ofuda at a target, causing it to explode with divine light (*searing-burns-2*)**

» **Throw an ofuda at a target, causing it to wrap around them (*bound-2*)**

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MYTHOS POWER SET

SHAPE-CHANGING +⊙(⊙)

Japanese mythology is full of beings that can change their shape, often into that of animals. This Challenge has access to shape-changing powers granted by a kami or yokai, or an appropriate Relic, and can transform into a single or multiple animal forms.

TAGS & STATUSES

Choose 2: *acute [senses]*, *brute strength*, *deadly venom*, *flight*, *nimble*, *pain resistance*, *sharp [natural weapons]*, *thick hide*

SPECIALS

ADVANCED SHAPECHANGER (+⊙): During Establish, this Challenge can change their animal form and pick out new base tags. When in their animal form, this Challenge may choose to have a Scale of 1. This Challenge can also take any human form, gaining *indistinguishable-3* to counter the PCs' attempts to discern their true identity.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Shapeshift into their animal form or prepare to use its natural abilities*
- » **Snatch something small from someone (burn a tag)**
- » **Attack with natural weapons (*bitten-2* or *slashed-2*, an optionally *poisoned-2*)**
- » **Flee the scene with remarkable fleetness (Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Leap, skitter, fly, or slither to a new position (gain *out-of-reach-3*)**
- » **Howl, shriek, puff up, or open hungry jaws (*intimidated-2*)**

MYTHOS POWER SET

TAINTED +⊙

Those who have had contact with corruptive or unclean Mythical spiritual forces, such as yokai of death and disease, can become *tainted* – a state known in Shinto as kegare (polluted, impure, or unclean). This Power Set represents a Mythical example of this taint, someone who is so deeply suffused with polluted spiritual energy that they become physically altered in demonic ways.

Tainted hinders magical powers that act against the Challenge and also grants the Challenge supernatural resilience to physical and biological harm. For the newly infected, *tainted* is a compelling status which drives destructive and careless use of Mythic powers. If it maxes out an NPC's Limit, they get the Tainted Power Set, while PCs lose control and become unthinking vehicles of rage. This Power Set is removed once the status is removed. The MC can also require a cleansing ritual to be performed after the status is removed (see also **Performing Magical Rituals** in the supplement *:Otherscape Action Database*).

This Power Set is intended for human Challenges.
For a tainted kami, use **Kami, Wild Soul** (page 108).

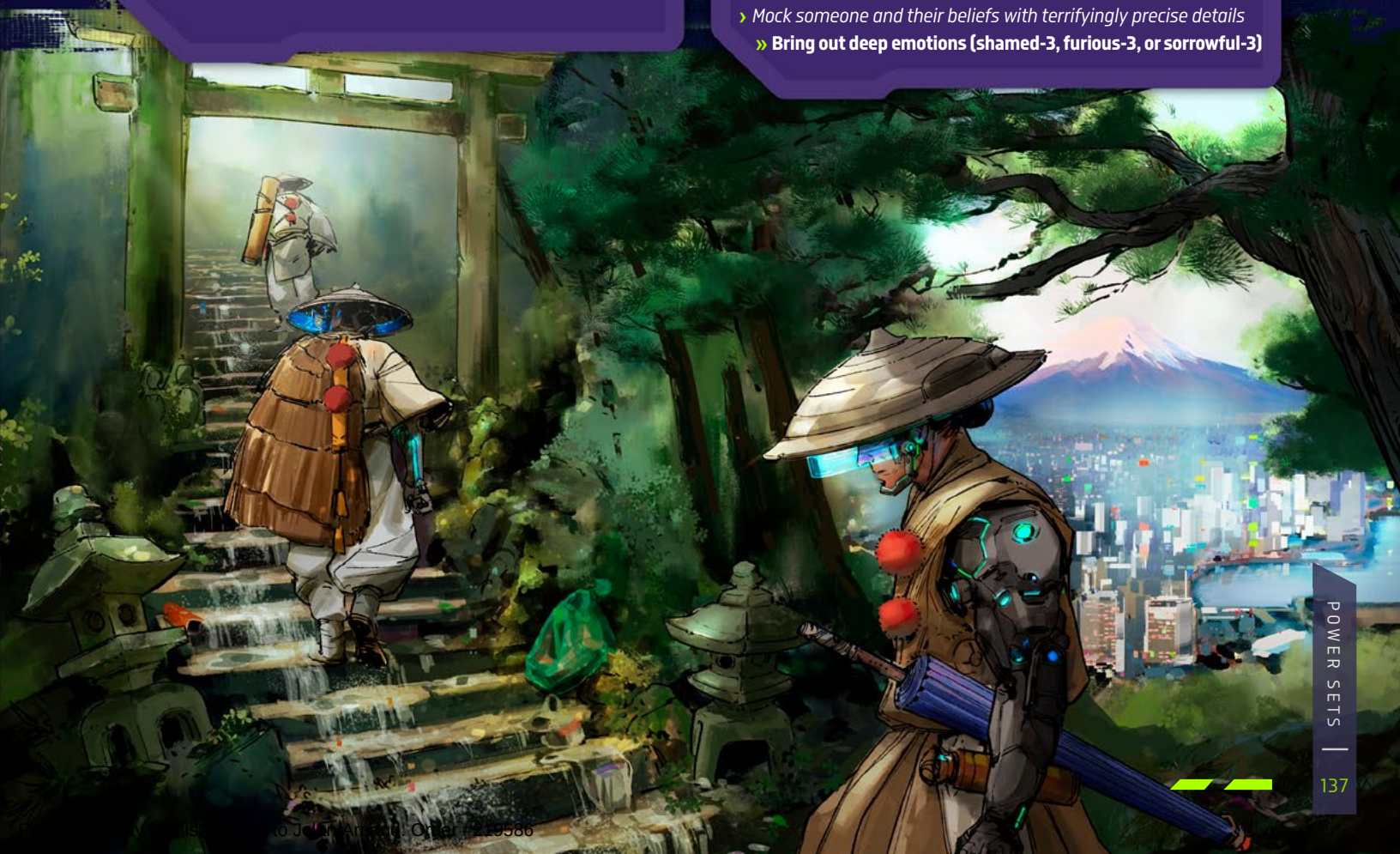
TAGS & STATUSES

tainted-2, and choose 3 tags: *claws*, *elongated limbs*, *extra heads*, *inhuman strength*, *iron skin*, *multiple arms*, *spider legs*, *wings*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Act wildly, running around and cackling with demonic power*
- » **Spread the taint by touching someone or something (*tainted-2*)**
- » **Lash out with demonic claws or teeth (*deep-gashes-3* and *tainted-2*)**

› *Mock someone and their beliefs with terrifyingly precise details*
- » **Bring out deep emotions (shamed-3, furious-3, or sorrowful-3)**



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MYTHOS POWER SET

TANREN ASCETIC +

Willingly or not, this Challenge has endured extreme conditioning out in the elements or in the wastelands, tapping ancient magic of physical durability. There have long been ascetic movements in Japan dedicated to experiencing spiritual journeys through physical conditioning and exposure to the raw elements of nature. Teachers who command the Esoteric concepts of tanren (forging one's spirit and body) require their students to devote themselves to such a conditioning, a rigorous training that remakes the person.

These traditions have become more prevalent among the outcasts in the Meido, where the land has been ravaged by pollution and climate change and many had to go through great difficulties just to survive. The Yamabushi require such conditioning as part of their initiation, but some people might find themselves forced into this situation through no choice of their own, and happen to impress a kami who then grants them a blessing of supernatural toughness. Only a greater magical force can take away such resilience.

TAGS & STATUSES

hard of body and mind, *resilient to the elements*, *negate [weapon, hand-to-hand, feints, etc.]*, *undeterred-3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Change stance to adapt to an attack (replace *negate [type of attack]* with a new type of attack)**

» **Inspire resolution in face of a dangerous situation (give *undeterred-2* to allies)**

MYTHOS POWER SET

UNCANNY BARE-HANDS WARRIOR +

Whether graced at the shrine of an ancestral warrior kami or bearing the belt of a famed karateka, this Challenge has been Touched by a Source that allows them to perform uncanny hand-to-hand fighting feats the likes of which are only seen in VR. Martial arts attacks and physical stunts made by this Challenge are Mythical in nature and can circumvent conventional physics and even common sense. They are able to block most mundane weapons with their bare hands or are fast enough to dodge even gunfire.

TAGS & STATUSES

blocking-2, *evasive-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Strike with an impossibly rapid flurry of blows (*bruised-2* or *staggering-2* three times)**

» **Knock out a *staggering* opponent with a devastating blow (*unconscious-5*)**

» **Contort using secret movements, freeing themselves of bonds (remove up to 2 tiers of constraint or subdual)**

MYTHOS POWER SET

ZEN-ENLIGHTENED +

Through Esoteric Zen Buddhist practices or mind-expanding cyberspace meditations, this Challenge has found a tranquil center point within themselves. They are able to come to full acceptance of any circumstance they find themself in, letting go of any emotional burden or leaving any situation they don't wish to be a part of.

TAGS & STATUSES

mental resistance, *calm-2*

SPECIALS

BUDDHA PALM: While this Challenge is *focused*, nothing can harm them and no form of magic can affect them. Anyone attempting to harm or influence them first takes *compassionate-5*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Close their eyes and take a breath to self-center*

» **Recite a sacred mantra, koan, or catchphrase (gain *focused-3*)**

» **Accept their circumstances (remove three tiers from an emotional status)**

» **Transmute negative emotions**

» **Assume a stoic expression and leave the scene (Deny Them Something They Want)**

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NOISE POWER SETS

You can find an additional Noise Power Set as a variant of a Self Power Sets: Cutting Edge (page 132).

NOISE POWER SET

BOT SYMPATHIZER +⊙

This Challenge sees robots, androids, and digital beings as equal to human beings, and has acquired the advanced programming skills required to communicate with them. A Bot Sympathizer is even able to talk robots and AI into acting in ways that seem to defy their programming, such as harming their owner or designated controller.

TAGS & STATUSES

subvert programmed behavior

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Initiate connection with a robot or AI*
  » **Incite rebellion (Give a compelling status such as** *rebellious-2***)**
  » **Convince a robot to attack its master (deliver a robotic Challenge's Consequence, or an ally bot inflicts** *injured-2***)**

NOISE POWER SET

EXOSKELETON OPERATOR +⊙⊙

Not quite a full-sized Kumo Crawler, the powered exoskeleton worn by this Challenge nevertheless allows them to handle large objects with significant strength and maneuverability. While most commonly used in construction sites, these suits are a favorite of criminal elements who are in need of a low-cost "tank" to help beat down tough opposition.

LIMITS

OVERLOAD 2

DISABLE: Remove this Power Set.

TAGS & STATUSES

steel shielding, *powered-movements-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Close the distance to the target with one mighty leap*
  » **Slam the target with a fist (***crushed-4* **and** *thrown-back-3***)**

› *Lift a car or some other large object*
  » **Throw it at someone (***crushed-5***)**
› *Slam its mechanical fists on a barrier or obstacle*
  » **Smash through (Escalate the situation or Deny Them Something They Want)**

NOISE POWER SET

EXTRA LIMBS +⊙(⊙)

This Challenge has a plethora of robotic limbs protruding from their torso, providing amazing functionality with a variety of athletic and hand-to-hand applications, such as climbing, grappling, or fighting. The limbs have rudimentary automotive functionalities which allow them to act and react even when their owner doesn't give them conscious attention; nevertheless, most people can only handle two or four extra limbs at a time.

This cyberware is popular among Buddhist Neo-Anachronist warrior monks or followers, who install extra arms to emulate and perhaps even to embody certain devas. Some criminals install human-sized spider legs to help them with infiltration and sneaking.

TAGS & STATUSES

extra arms or *extra legs*

SPECIALS

MANY-LIMBED ATTACK: Whenever this Challenge attacks using their limbs, choose one: they hit twice as many targets as normal, they apply *overwhelmed-2* before the attack, or they inflict a status one tier higher than normal.

COMPLETE SYNCHRONICITY (+⊙): This Challenge is able to pay full attention to all of their arms at the same time, thanks to discipline, neurochips, or magic. They have the base status *synchronic-movement-3*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Scamper up the wall (gain** *high-ground-2***)**

» **Use some limbs to grab onto a target (***grappled-3***)**

» **Bring forward an arm holding a weapon or a tool (create a new story tag)**

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NOISE POWER SET

HIVE-LINKED

When these drones and/or other robotic Challenges are networked together to share information and coordinate activities, they become exponentially more dangerous.

LIMITS

CRASH NETWORK 2

CRASH NETWORK: Remove this Power Set.

TAGS & STATUSES

firewalled-2, Scale 2

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Gather in and begin to move in unison*
- » **Harry a lone individual as a pack (*surrounded-2* and then inflict one of the Challenge's Consequences)**
- » **The members rearrange themselves in the field (gain *tactical-superiority-2*)**
- » **Coordinate to block attacks against someone or something (gain *deflecting-2*)**

NOISE POWER SET

ISHOKU-NANO PAINT

Ishoku-nano paints are temporary body paints made of engineered microbes that interact with their wearer' biology and cyberware. See **Body Attachments & Cybernetics** (page 81).

The effects of Ishoku-nano paints vary, but every person can only benefit from one paint at a time.

LIMITS

WASH OFF 2

WASH OFF: Remove this Power Set.

TAGS & STATUSES

firewalled-2, Scale 2

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Armored Skin: gain armored skin*
- » **Feel more confident (gain *bravery-1*)**

› **Enchanting:** *gain pheromone-alluring-2*
- » **Entrance someone with their sparkling skin and seductive scent (*titillated-2*)**

› **Heightened Senses:** *gain heightened-senses-2*
- » **Sense incoming attacks through minute air movements (gain *prepared-reaction-2*)**

All:
- » **Reapply the paint (reset *wash-off* and regain basic tags)**

NOISE POWER SET

NANITE-SHROUDED

This Challenge is shrouded in a cloud of nanite robots, capable of swarming a target and altering its matter at a microscopic level. Nanites are the most illegal devices in Tokyo – only the best connected criminals or corporations have access to this technology, and even they will only dare field it in dire situations. For this reason, simply seeing this tech deployed on the street can be a chilling moment even to a pro merc. Only specific nano-repellant tech, or magic, can block nantites; without these, mitigating nanite Effects is nearly impossible.

SPECIALS

THEY WOULDN'T... WOULD THEY?: When the nanties are first visibly deployed in a scene, they immediately inflict *intimidated-3* on everyone who wasn't expecting them.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Swarm a target with nanites*
- » **The cloud infiltrate a target's blood stream and disassemble their blood cells (*system-shock-4*)**
- » **The cloud breaks apart or reassembles an inanimate object (burn a story tag, change an item story tag into a different item, or add a story tag for a new feature)**

› *Command the swarm to spread*
- » **Order the cloud to alter the terrain (burn an environment story tag, or create one such as *caustic mist*, *crumbling ceiling*, *thorny ground*, or *slick ground*)**

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NOISE POWER SET

TAMATEBAKO PLUGGER

Hackers and tech tinkerers in Tokyo take great advantage of so-called "tamatebako", highly-specialized hardware cards, cartridges, and plug-and-play units that offer dedicated acceleration and computing power for specific cyberspace applications.

The downsides of tamatebako are many. They require a lot of power and they are a part of a hacker's hardware rig, so they must be either switched on or plugged in as needed. Their narrow applicability means they are considerably less flexible than software solutions. Finally, stringing these devices together in daisy chains and webs of fiber optic cable is fine when the hacker is holed up in a safe place, but it's a nightmare to run with.

TAGS & STATUSES

cumbersome, *power consuming*, *firewalled-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *(In meatspace) Browse, plug, and/or switch on a new tamatebako; (in VR) stall and seem unresponsive for a moment*
- » **Suddenly accelerate or intensify its cyberspace capabilities (gain *firewalled-3*, *accelerated-3*, *penetrating-3*, *encrypted-3*, or similar, or increase one of its usual Consequences by one for the scene)**
- » **Unleash a custom-tailored cyber attack (burn two cyberspace-related tags and then deal *crashed-3* or *take-over-3*)**
- » **Load up a hardcoded VR oni construct (Present a new Challenge: Oni VR Construct)**
- » **Run high-frequency scans of nearby signal or code (gain *alert-3*)**

NOISE POWER SET

TECH ARTISAN

This Challenge has been trained by the top technical engineers and industrial designers in the Tokyo Megacity, approaching or attaining the level of a master. They are capable of enhancing tech in their field of expertise – be it weapon-smithing, drone construction, cyberware design, or cyberspace architecture. Furthermore, given enough time they can craft a truly fearsome piece of equipment for their allies, equipping them to better face the PCs.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Tinker with a piece of tech, their own or their allies*
- » **Repair and restart a device (remove up to 3 tiers of malfunction statuses, restore up two two technological tags or up to 3 tiers of positive tech statuses)**
- » **Improve a device (*boosted-2* or any other appropriate tier 2 status, or add a new tag)**

› *(Away from the scene) Rumors or evidence show them to be spending time and resources on a secret project*
- » **Give another Challenge the Master-Crafted Power Set (optionally with the Cutting Edge variant).**

NOISE POWER SET

TRIGGER-POISONER

This Challenge is armed with advanced neurologic toxins that can slow reflexes, alter minds, or cause an excruciating death. These compounds may be administered with a simple touch or with traditional weapons, such as blowguns, shurikens, or daggers.

More interestingly, this Challenge is capable of infecting the target with triggered-action poison that takes effect at their discretion, a property which is often used to blackmail the target. This can be achieved with a time-delayed chemical or by introducing microscopic poison sacs into the target's bloodstream that dissolve once an encrypted Nearspace signal is received (or is no longer received), forcing the victim to do the poisoner's bidding.

TAGS & STATUSES

difficult to trace or filter

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Trigger Action Poison: When the conditions that trigger the poison are met, convert *delayed-poison* to the poison status of choice with the same tier.*
- » **Deliver with an attack or surreptitiously touch a target's exposed skin (*slowed-reflexes*, *hallucinating*, or *stopped-heart* of any tier; for trigger-action poisons: *delayed-poison*)**

› *Offer an antidote for a price*
- » **Present their demands (Escalate the situation and/or *compelled-3*)**

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YŌKAI VENDORS & GOODS

LOOT CATALOGS

The following entries list hard-to-reach or hard-to-find suppliers of unique gear and items, most of which are enchanted by kami or tainted by yōkai, or are sold by supernatural beings. Mercs who want access to these special offerings must first complete a related job, whether to locate the vendor or to gain their favor.



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THE DEAD MAN'S HAND

Arms Dealership



For years, arms traffickers have been developing ways to overcome the ID-locks that have become ubiquitous on modern firearms, in order to make good use of weapons scavenged from paramilitary disposals or picked from corpses killed in firefights. One such gunrunner is **Senji**, the android owner of the Dead Man's Hand, a high-end dealership specializing in unique scavenge. Senji knows the story of each weapon in his large catalog, and expects a buyer to show respect toward their purchase and keep it well maintained.

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Taiyō SolarTech Energy Pistol	An experimental weapon, powered by a yet unidentified solar energy cell, was recovered from the debris of a devastated Taiyō SolarTech R&D facility.	***energy pistol***, *destructive blasts, melts armor, bounce off reflective surfaces*	*unstable energy cell*
"The Bloody Saint" Rifle	The haunted paramilitary rifle of a soldier who refused an immoral order and was executed by their superiors. The soldier's spirit is now within the weapon, their morals unshaken.	***death-touched assault rifle***, *sense if someone is armed, vengeance against paramilitaries, just cause*	*won't hurt the unarmed*
"The Backstabber" Rat Pistol	An improvised gun owned by a Nezumi Punk who ratted out her gang to the authorities. Some rat magic caught on, encouraging betrayal by concealing itself from tech, magic, and ordinary senses.	***rat-magic plastic pistol***, *magical concealment, sudden betrayal, summon rats*	*janky*
Quicksilver "Reclaimer" Ammunition	A discarded development by Ishii-Harada, these cartridges of supercharged mercurial liquid shut off electronics on impact with little damage to the target. Perfect for recapturing runaway drones or androids.	***Supercharged liquid metal ammo***, *conductive targets, the more tech – the better effect, create an electrocuted puddle*	*magnetic fields*
Vibro-katana	The CEO of Ueda Artisan Arms personally developed and was beheaded by this augmented sword, whose blade alloy vibrates several times per second thanks to an invisible magnetic coating, effectively turning it into a molecular chainsaw.	***vibro-katana, fluid motions***, *cuts through any material, protective scabbard*	*gradual ablation*
Ever-poisoned Kunai	These knives were taken from a Ghost Market operative, and the Enforcers are keen on getting them back. Thanks to Koduko (poison) sorcery, they are always coated with a poison, each with a different one.	***poisoned kunai***, *neuro-paralytic, befuddlement poison, blinding poison*	*hunted by the Ghost Market*

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TAKARANEKO KONBINI

Supernatural Convenience Store



Feeling down on your luck? Visit Takaraneko Konbini, a convenience store franchise which can be found on the alleys of Tokyo's districts, and even in some cyberspace corners. Beyond the usual synthetic meat instant noodles and six-piece vegetable sushi, Takaraneko stores also sell products with magical properties, found here and there among the common logos. Not all cashiers are even aware of this, as the magic originates with the cats lounging by the till. They would occasionally look up to smile and beckon a new customer to make a purchase, suggesting a specific item with an adorable voice. These cats are actually the owners of the stores, Sources of the Maneki-Neko (lucky cat), and if they become displeased with you, you'll suddenly be unable to find what you're looking for, or even the konbini itself.

Most of the following loadout tags are typically consumable.

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Restorative Instant Meals	Convenient or instant meals like ramen, bento boxes, and onigiri that provide health, warmth and comfort to whoever consumes them.	***healing meals***, *stop bleeding, rejuvenate the mind, satisfying meal*	*creates a powerful smell*
Yōkai Snacks	The mascot characters on these snacks depict a certain yōkai, and eating the snack temporarily grants the yōkai's power.	***yōkai snack***, *oni's strength, tengu's flight, kitsune's cunning*	*loud crunch*
Eiyo Elixirs	These tiny energy drink bottles empower the imbiber with uncanny physical or mental abilities.	***magical energy drink***, *relentless endurance, clever thoughts, hardened against magical taint*	*hyperactive*
Divination Magazines	Magazines and manga that feature you as their protagonist, telling your story and even your future.	***divination magazines***, *understand my internal monologue, read my future, learn about my environment*	*can't put it down*
Omamori Keychains	These protective charms come in a variety of cute designs.	***protective charms***, *ward against bad luck, ward against yōkai magic, cute*	*fade with repeated use*

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KODOKU FURIURI

Cyberspace Peddlar

Shōki is a rogue AI who travels across cyberspaces as a lonesome peddler. Carrying a bamboo pole across her shoulders, with a basket hanging on each end, she trades in a variety of supernatural computer viruses for sale with the Source of Kegare, the Shinto concept of spiritual impurity and befoulment. The user of these viruses pays a heavy price for their malicious acts: a taint on their spirit which creates discomfort in those that engage with them and actively repluses kami (*tainted*). The viruses, as well as the taint, can be removed through harae (ritual purification).



ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Mushi Rootkit	This virus makes the target mystically oblivious, allowing the user to enact direct control over them.	***obliviating attack***, *take over electronics, digital mind control, enslave cyberware*	*pure or sacred targets*
Kurashi Replicant	A massively self-replicating denial of service attack (DDOS) that overwhelms a cyberspace avatar. It proceeds to enter the mind of the Harnessed hacker and have their personality temporarily replaced by one of the user's own design.	***Kurashi attack***, *DDOS attack, personality replacement, design a personality*	*pure or sacred targets*
Utoshi Data Harvester	More than this virus seeks to steal information, it seems almost eager to corrupt it, whether it's computer data or the memories of a person.	***data harvester***, *steal secrets, corrupt memories*	*pure or sacred targets*
Kō-ware	Used to steal funds, this virus can also sap the target's luck and transfer it to the user.	***financial malware***, *empty bank account, siphon fortune, hard to detect*	*pure or sacred targets*
Nigosu Worm	This ethereal entity is effective against virtual defenses that rely on Sources, interfering with their spiritual connection.	***mystical anti-antivirus***, *interfere with Sources, shut down Source powers, feared by Source-based cybersecurity*	*pure or sacred targets*
Shiko Worldbuilder	A destructive virus that infects a cyberspace area and completely rewrites it to the user's will.	***world-hijacking virus***, *take over a virtual space, recreate the area, "My world, my rules"*	*hallowed or sanctified Domains*

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WAYSIDE SHRINES

Boon-Giving Places of Power



In derelict neighborhoods and dark alleyways, one may come across a hokora, a wayside shrine. These small wooden or stone structures are centuries old, a relic of a bygone era dedicated to minor kami whose names have been forgotten. Showing proper respect, however, can still benefit an honest worshiper.

To receive a shrine's blessing, a PC may make an offering and pray to the shrine's kami, which might require a roll (quick, or tracked, by maxing *appeal*). Asking for a blessing more than once per downtime or even once per job is typically seen as greedy and disrespectful.

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Blessing of Communion	Create a deeper connection with your Source to unlock its hidden potential.	***blessing of communion**, understand a kami's wish, reach beyond limits of [chosen power], detect nearby Sources*	*weaker if any Decay is marked*
Blessing of Fortune	Gain fortune and luck, or at least, a bit more than usual. The blessing can typically only affect mundane occurrences.	***blessing of fortune**, create fortunate circumstances, open an avenue for wealth, narrow escape*	*weaker against Sources*
Blessing of Enlightenment	Become wiser and gain knowledge of the world beyond the Noise.	***blessing of enlightenment**, uncannily focused awareness, see into the Otherscape, resistance to corruption*	*no interest in worldly things*
Blessing of Passage	Ensure your safe and timely arrival at your destination.	***blessing of passage**, no sudden surprises, pierce magical barriers, speedy travel*	*expires if the destination changes*
Blessing of Health	Maintain your health and keep death at bay.	***blessing of health**, defend against diseases, slowly regenerate, image of health*	*weaker if tainted*
Blessing of Protection	Gain safety from any form of harm.	***blessing of protection**, physical shield, magical ward, mental fortification*	*induces mild paranoia*

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CHAPTER 4

//KEY PLAYERS

Factions of Tokyo 20XX

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SHOGUNS OF THE CYBER-AGE UNDERWORLD

Every Megacity has its own power players, be they corporations, crime syndicates, cults, or trending social movements. The following Tokyo Megacity Key Players can be used as factions, interested parties, dubious employers, or troublemakers for jobs set in Tokyo 20XX, or as the main antagonists of an entire series.

KEY PLAYER MEMBERSHIPS FOR PCS

When creating characters hailing from or operating in Tokyo Megacity, players may choose to create a PC who is associated with one of the Key Players. Similarly, a PC may choose to become involved with a Key Player during the game and replace some of their themes with new themes associated with that group.

All Key Players offer character tropes and theme kits for rapid creation of characters and/or themes. Publicly known Key Players are already listed in the New Player Options chapter (page 40) and are referred to in the respective Membership sections. Player options for secretive Key Players, which the PCs must uncover during play, are only shown under their respective Membership section and can be made available to your players at your discretion.

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BUREAU OF ONMYŌ

A corrupt age-old government body tasked with maintaining the supernatural balance.

> "We have been carefully tending to the fire of knowledge throughout the centuries, keeping safe the lore of the kami, always prepared to act in defiance to their harm. We are now in an age of nightmares, when monsters dare stalk the streets in broad daylight, ghosts infiltrate our sacred institutions. We are the only ones who understand the yōkai, the only ones with the legal right to deal with them. Harmony and balance must be maintained."
>
> **– Chief Inspector Ishikawa Rin**

Centuries ago the fledgling Japanese empire created a bureaucratic agency based on mystical Chinese teachings of balance, flow, and natural change. The purpose of this Bureau of Onmyō was to provide answers to supernatural questions posed by Japan's rulers. The members of the Bureau, called onmyōji, became practitioners of the Esoteric knowledge of Yin and Yang, blessed by the Mythos of Onmyōdō, an early Japanese system of natural science which evolved from metaphysical concepts of Chinese origin.

They learned to use prophecy at scales large and small, to predict the future and maintain the calendar. They came to focus their power through a single sacred shrine, which would later be removed and rebuilt whenever the capital of the empire changed, flowing along with the center of power.

Through careful study and experimentation, these supernaturally trained clerks and political appointees learned to summon their own personal kami, the shikigami. As their mastery over spirits increased, they were tasked with tracking the yōkai and other strange forces which threatened the empire. They turned their magics and shikigami against

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these creatures, cleansing the land. Soon they broadened their purview even further and began to police all forms of supernatural activity, going where Shinto priests could not, for fear of losing their religious purity.

But they did their job *too* well. By the time the Industrial Revolution came along, the Bureau's services were no longer needed. The yōkai were nowhere to be found, and more efficient, less ritualistic methods of prediction came to replace the laborious ways of the onmyōji. The Bureau lost so much of its power, it almost shut its doors for good. Funding was severely slashed, branches shut, staff numbers radically reduced, training drastically curtailed, and influence dangerously lost, yet the remaining onmyōji retained the knowledge the bureau had acquired over centuries of policing rogue spirits. They kept the flame burning, predicting a day when the yōkai would return in strength.

For the last few decades the Bureau has gathered its resources and trained a new generation of onmyōji inspectors. The rise of the Noise has made it almost impossible to convince government officials outside of the Bureau to accept its worth, to say nothing of increasing its budget, and therefore leaders within the Bureau started using their spiritual servants to gather blackmail on the Megacity's administrative leaders, pulling strings to secure funding. While many see the Bureau as a laughably superstitious government agency, the Bureau's agents see themselves as fighters on the frontline of a war they're steadily losing, willing to go further and further, and justifying their acts by constantly widening the definition of 'corruption'.

The onmyōji justify their questionable activities by claiming they help keep the world in balance, in the name of Yin and Yang and the betterment of the Megacity. Yet as the Bureau's influence grows, its agents grow bolder and stray further. They seek to destroy corruption in both the spiritual and mundane senses, and yet more and more of them succumb to both, using whatever means they please to avert demonic yōkai forces in their role as Source regulators and protectors of the Megacity. Some bind yōkai to their service, while others serve such creatures in return for powerful magics they see as necessary tools in their arsenals.

POWER CORRUPTS

After years of being shunned by the government, the Bureau of Onmyō is used to handling its own business. Through blackmail and careful political manipulations it has managed to gain official authority over all supernatural activity in Tokyo, granting it access and enforcement powers throughout the Megacity, even among high circles.

THE BUREAU AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Root out "corruption", which means yōkai influence of any sort, through means both mystical and technological.
- **MO:** Bureaucratic authority, acting on ancient knowledge of the kami, prophetic predictions, funding through blackmail.
- **Tech:** Cybernetics and drones enhanced with ki flow sensors, allowing for real time feng shui assessments and supernatural tracking.
- **Sources:** Esoteric knowledge gained through the Mythos of Onmyōdō. Inspectors are armed with one-use spells written on magically inscribed ofuda (paper talismans) and their personal shikigami kami.
- **Frontliners:** Detectives, known as onmyōji, investigating supernatural corruption.
- **Stronghold:** The Temple of Onmyōdō, a place rebuilt each time the capital of Japan moved, where the Bureau's leaders meet and important ceremonies are conducted.
- **Motifs***:* Trench coats and sunglasses. Yin-Yang symbols on badges. Spells that glow with lines of power, cast from burning ofuda papers.

The Bureau's financing department and higher management have perfected several magical blackmailing techniques, using scrying, dream walking, and fortune manipulation to obtain personal information or force their targets to act in a despicable manner, which they then capture on camera. These techniques, as well as the blackmail materials themselves, are passed personally between those in the know, to reduce the chance of anyone else learning of them, whether from within the Bureau or outside it.

The inspectors of the Bureau stalk the streets, going wherever they please, appearing unannounced. They have the authority to execute those they suspect of being corrupted, but considering the Bureau is the agency which decides how to define and measure corruption, there's some real danger of power running amok here. And indeed, while in the past the inspectors would only attack people who were possessed and corrupted by the supernatural, these days, almost any sort of influence can mark one as being corrupt, depending on the onmyōji doing the questioning.

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Two things reign back this power. First, the Bureau's ongoing manpower crisis means most onmyōji work alone, and one must have quite the gall to stand before an entire gang of oni motorcycles and just start shooting. Second, and at least for now, most onmyōji are people of principle. Still subscribing to old recruitment processes, the Bureau is very selective when picking initiates, as it deems only a rare few worthy of being Japan's magical judges and keepers of the ancient secrets.

Onmyōji usually travel in their own cars, with their shikigami at their side. They are armed with police-grade guns and blessed ammo, but usually defer to their magical training with which they can manipulate energies, move things from afar, and create protective wards.

BALANCED STRUCTURE

The Bureau is a tiered structure, led by a master of Onmyōdō who bears the title of Kami, with each tier wielding petty bureaucratic power over those below them in the chain of command. Below the Kami is a tier of deputies and secretaries, who run much of the bureau's spying and blackmail operations. Beneath these bureaucrats are the onmyōji, the on-the-scene inspectors who patrol the Megacity in search of the supernatural taint of yōkai corruption.

All onmyōji are well-versed in arcane teachings and Megacity laws, but not all of them wield Esoteric Yin and Yang magic. An onmyōji's initiation includes a visit to the Temple of Onmyōdō where they are exposed to the Source, but a few do not gain the required enlightenment. They must carry this shame and rely on more mundane methods in their onmyōji duties.

Nearly every onmyōji inspector has her own personal shikigami as a servant and sidekick that exists within both the real world and cyberspace simultaneously. In ages past, the Bureau used to sell the services of their shikigami to "curse" one's enemies, for a hefty fee. Today, these spirits, which look like a ghostly child or ethereal animal, are deployed as spies, occult assistants, and even assassins. The bond between the onmyōji and her spirit is complex, as the spirits are not always willing partners and must be reigned in with binding spells. Showing mastery of these spells is a sign of great respect among the onmyōji.

Ascribing to the Chinese teachings of yin-yang mastery and feng shui, each inspector sees themselves as crucial elements of a larger system, maintaining a careful balancing act within their organization. Every onmyōji ascribes to one of the five gogyō (elements), elemental alignments which serve as guiding principles and political factions within the Bureau, struggling against one another over directives and goals. The elemental factions are:

Earth: *Late summer, agreeableness, stability.* These onmyōji work to bring balance through solid policework and adherence to the rules of celestial law, part of the Onmyōdō methodology. These investigators are the most reliable of onmyōji agents, willing to grind out minor cases, treating them with just as much respect as they would a major mystery.

Fire: *Summer, passion, purification.* These onmyōji desire only to destroy the yōkai, and they tend to go overboard when cleansing sites of demonic taint or interrogating those they consider tainted. Openly zealous, they are seen by others as dangerous yet undeniably effective.

Metal: *Fall, ambition, logic.* Seeking to integrate cybertechnology and modern economics into the quest for balance, these onmyōji drag the ancient Bureau into the future. Metal-associated onmyōji embrace modernity as a means of fighting the mystical, claiming that tech is the antithesis of magic in the yin-yang.

Water: *Winter, erudition, secrets.* The water-aligned seek to find answers through study of the oldest prophecies and texts, and by engaging with kami willing to share wisdom. Their strange ways give them a reputation for unreliability within the Bureau, and they are said to be the most likely to fall to temptation.

Wood: *Spring, flexibility, cooperation.* These onmyōji seek to make peace with the yōkai and other kami, using negotiations and diplomatic agreements. They also try to play nice with the other onmyōji elemental factions, working to smooth over disagreements and encourage adaptation to changing circumstances.

KEY CHARACTERS

Chief Inspector **ISHIKAWA RIN** is the Bureau's chief onmyōji, serving as leader to the supernatural investigators. She is a tough-as-nails detective who came out of the Megacity's police force after investigating a brutal series of murders done by a vampiric creature called a jikininki ("human-eating ghost"). Rin sees the Bureau as a stopgap measure keeping the Megacity safe from mystical threats, a temporary solution at best. She believes that ultimately outside help will always be needed, and considers the Megacity to be eternally on the verge of destruction at the hands of ancient terrors. She'll take any help she can get, drawing upon mercenaries, fired up vigilantes, corp security, and even military support.

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The Bureau's Kami is the powerful sorcerer **YASUDA-SAMA**. Yasuda-sama keeps his real identity and given name (Daisuke) a secret, since as an experienced blackmailer he is keenly aware of how much damage one can cause if they ever get their hands on this information. A master of both bureaucratic manipulations and of a host of shikigami, he uses blackmail and a knowledge of the law to manipulate the Megacity government into funding the Bureau of Onmyō, whether it wants to or not. He is a subtle master, pulling strings from the shadows and rarely seen even within the Bureau. Those who have been in the sorcerer's presence claim that his aura is palpable, causing a chill in the air. Rumors abound that he has perhaps fallen to demonic taint, but little evidence for this exists, as Yasuda-sama approves and encourages Bureau activities against the forces of chaos and destruction running rampant in Tokyo.

KEY LOCATIONS

The Bureau's secret center of power is the **TEMPLE OF ONMYŌDŌ**, an ancient structure rebuilt many times, and now hidden under a major skyscraper in Tokyo. It is the meeting place for the leaders of the Bureau and the site where important rituals are conducted. New inspectors are initiated here and come in contact with the Source of Onmyōdō as part of their Esoteric teachings. Water-aligned onmyōji conduct most of their prophetic work in the Temple.

The **HOUSE OF KAMI** is another of the Bureau's secret temples, but this one serves as a jail. Deadly yōkai are kept here in eternal imprisonment, having been turned to stone using onmyōji spells. Should a statue break, the yōkai would be released into the world once again. The temple's powerful wards make it safe for onmyōji to train their spirit summoning and binding powers here, and the Bureau's most knowledgeable sages spend much of their time in quiet contemplation among the rows of yōkai statues. New onmyōji must venture here to bind themselves to their shikigami companion. They return if their companions suffer terrible magical harm in action, as the sorcerers on staff are adept at spiritual rejuvenation. Hidden in the mountains west of the Megacity, the location of the House of Kami is known only to a few. No outsiders to the Bureau are permitted knowledge of its existence, and even the onmyōji are brought here without being shown the way.

The **HOUSE OF SCRIBES** is the Bureau's library, disguised as a short skyscraper with an aesthetic inspired by the Shinto shrines of old. It contains a vast amount of obscure sources related to the kami, from books to scrolls to digital storage devices; its cyberspace presence is just as impressive, and well-guarded. The House also contains a scriptorium where spells are magically inscribed on ofuda paper talismans for one-time use by inspectors and Bureau sorcerers. The site is frequented by the bureau's onmyōji, who often drop by before they take on a case in which they expect trouble. A number of scribes are also programmers, working to create cyberspace scrolls and adapting the strangely cybernetic qualities of the shikigami to trace mythic activities on the net.

BUREAU OF ONMYŌ STORY HOOKS

- After encountering a dangerous yōkai, the crew are approached by an onmyōji. The inspector proposes working together to figure out what's going on and handle this dangerous enemy; they also secretly take this opportunity to assess if the crew is corrupted, and how.
- A mystical terrorist group takes control of a major skyscraper, holding corporate leaders hostage, and the crew are hired by the Bureau of Onmyō to help assault the building. The crew is expected to help with either covert infiltration or frontal assault – not an onmyōji's best capabilities – and get to experience first hand some of the Bureau's magic, such as cool and strange yin-yang ofuda talismans, and even a shikigami on loan.
- A member of the crew is contacted by Ishikawa Rin in the hopes of inducting them into the Bureau, but first they must pass a test: solve a supernatural murder, being as lawful as possible. Rin even lends them some policing resources.
- The crew notices someone tailing them after a mission and soon realize that they are being investigated by a zealous fire-aligned member of the Bureau who suspects that their Sources are a danger to the Megacity. Two other onmyōji engage them privately: one who wishes to get the crew's help in quelling the zealot's fire, and another who says they can remove this little problem, for a favor (read: future blackmail material).
- Chief Inspector Ishikawa contacts the crew, hiring them to work as an objective outsider in an in-house murder investigation. An inspector has been murdered in a manner involving an ancient spell. Something bad is brewing and a corrupt onmyōji may be the cause.

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BUREAU OF ONMYŌ CHALLENGES

CHIEF INSPECTOR ISHIKAWA

Chief Inspector Ishikawa Rin is the head of the onmyōji investigators and the highest ranking member of the Bureau of Onmyō who is likely to be sent out into the field. She tends to remain back at the office until something spectacularly dangerous occurs within the supernatural world.

The chief is a trained police detective with nerves of steel and an instinct for supernatural trouble. She is a fire-aligned onmyōji, but she keeps her fiery temperament in check with daily meditation on the need for balance and harmony.

When Chief Inspector Ishikawa arrives it is often sudden. She drives a flying car called Toryū ("dragon slayer") which is enchanted with magical stealth capabilities and wards against yōkai.

ONMYŌJI INSPECTOR

- A typical supernatural bureaucrat looking to write a ticket for unlicensed magical powers. If things get dangerous, they're ready to pull out the big guns and cast elemental or binding spells from ofuda strips, but they'd rather just be on their way to their next inspection site.
- As long as the use of magic or the spirits is harmless or innocuous, the Onmyōji Inspector is willing to just go away if they are sufficiently paid. Should the situation become dire or life-threatening, or if a yōkai uses an obvious magical power, their *bribe* Limit becomes –.

CHIEF INSPECTOR ISHIKAWA

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 6 **INTIMIDATE –**

TAGS & STATUSES

blessed ammo, *body armor*, *nerves of steel*, *shikigami*, *fiery-emotions-2*, *warded-against-magic-2*

SPECIALS

DETECTIVE'S INTUITION: Upon entering the scene, Chief Inspector Ishikawa learns which characters present are touched by Mythoi. She doesn't learn any details, but she has a gut feeling as to who dabbles in the supernatural.

FIRE-ALIGNED: The Chief Inspector can inflict *burning-2* whenever she attacks someone through any means, in addition to the attack's usual Consequences.

PROPHETIC BRIEFING: Once per scene, Chief Inspector Ishikawa completely avoids an attack, a trap, or other danger thanks to a prophetic warning she was briefed on before the mission.

TORYŪ: While inside her flying car, the Chief Inspector and her passengers have *invisible-3* and *warded-against-magic-3*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Land Toryū unexpectedly at a supernatural crime scene*
- » **Issue a citation for a supernatural infraction (*suppressed-Source-3* and *tagged-2*)**
- » **Discover a vital clue the PCs would have preferred she wouldn't have (Escalate the Situation)**

› *Ask a question with a no-nonsense tone*
- » **Demand an answer (*intimidated-4*)**
- » **Give someone a withering look (remove two tiers of a positive emotion status)**

› *Enter a fighting stance, ready to cast a spell*
- » **Cast a spell to *banish-6* a yōkai or turn it to stone (*petrified-6*)**
- » **Create a defensive ward which can protect multiple targets from supernatural attacks (*magic shield* with *wide*)**
- » **Conjure magical handcuffs around a target's wrists (*magically-bound-4*)**
- » **Fire warning shots with her heavy pistol (*intimidated-4*) or take aim and shoot a target (*wounded-4*)**

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ONMYŌJI INSPECTOR

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **BRIBE 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

blessed ammo, *ofuda talismans*, *protective wards*, *personal shikigami*

SPECIALS

ELEMENTAL ALIGNMENT: Choose one; the Inspector gets a tag representing their alignment as well as the listed special features.

- » *Earth-aligned*: **The Inspector has *methodical* and *stable-2*.**
- » *Fire-aligned*: **The Inspector has *fiery-emotions-2* and can inflict *burning-2* whenever they attack someone through any means, in addition to the attack's usual Consequences.**
- » *Metal-aligned*: **The Inspector has *feng-shui cybernetic eye* and their shikigami has *firewalled-2*.**
- » *Water-aligned*: **The Inspector has *prophetic warnings* and *mysterious-2*.**
- » *Wood-aligned*: **The Inspector has *diplomatic* and can inflict *entangled-2* whenever they attack someone through any means, in addition to the attack's usual Consequences.**

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Discreetly place a notice of an impending inspection on the door of a place of business or residence*

› *Pace around slowly, looking the area up and down for evidence of the supernatural*
- » **Uncover illicit supernatural activity (Escalate the situation)**
- » **Confiscate supernatural paraphernalia (burn a tag on a Mythos theme or Mythic item)**

› *Tsk-tsk quietly as they begin writing up a ticket*
- » **Write a ticket for supernatural infractions (*heavily-fined-3*)**

› *Place their hand on the grip of their heavy pistol*
- » **Draw the pistol and fire blessed bullets (*gun-shot-3*)**

› *Draw an ofuda talisman and inspect it closely*
- » **Cast a spell to *banish-5* a yōkai or turn it to stone (*petrified-5*)**
- » **Cast a spell appropriate to their element (inflict a status or create or burn a tag)**
- » **Create a *magic shield* against supernatural attacks**
- » **Invoke their shikigami, if it isn't already present (Present a new Challenge: Shikigami)**



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SHIKIGAMI

A shikigami is a spirit companion favored by Onmyōji that takes the form of a ghostly child or animal. It can exist both in cyberspace and physical space, and while in their natural state they have no material presence, they are usually ordered by their binders to manifest and maintain their form. When unseen, a shikigami tends to... get ideas, and test the limits of their binding and the patience of their binder. Better to keep them in sight. When materialized or interfaced with cyberspace, a shikigami takes physical or digital damage (respectively) on their *banished* Limit.

While the onmyōji are the most known binders of shikigami, the knowledge and power to bind such a spirit is available through other Sources, and so others Challenges can boast a shikigami companion or even be given one 'on loan' from the Bureau.

Possessed is a compelling status directing the creature to aid the Shikigami's master. The shikigami cannot materialize and cannot deliver any other Consequences while it is possessing an individual, except the possession Consequence itself.

SHIKIGAMI

LIMITS

BANISHED 3

SPECIALS

BODYGUARD: When an attack is made against its master, if the Shikigami can protect its master, it takes the attack's Effects instead.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The shikigami materializes close by*
- » **Cast a minor disruptive curse on someone (*fumbling-2*)**
- » **Steal a small item (burn a tag or Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Possess a living creature (*possessed-3*)**

› *Unexpectedly, a fleeting wild animal is seen or a momentary gentle breeze blows*
- » **Collect incriminating evidence against someone (Escalate the situation)**

YŌKAI-TRACKING DRONE

These flying robots, about the size and shape of a basketball, are deployed by the Bureau in an effort to sniff out yōkai threats. Systematically scouring streets, abandoned buildings, access tunnels, and the like, they attempt to locate and identify supernatural readings. A special incense grants them fine-tuned feng-shui sensors, with which they can easily tell apart a kami spirit or a practicing sorcerer from someone using mundane sleight of hand or holographics to simulate the supernatural. The *insight* status generated by this drone hinders actions to hide or mask any supernatural activity from the Bureau.

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Bureau of Onmyō Challenges include Peace-Keeping, Street Fighting, Kami-Blessed, Ki Sensitive, and Ofuda Arsenal.

YŌKAI-TRACKING DRONE

LIMITS

WRECK 2 **SHUTDOWN OR TAKE OVER 2** **DEPLETED 3**

DEPLETED: The drone retreats and returns to the nearest Bureau of Onmyōji office

TAGS & STATUSES

small and agile, *feng-shui sensors*, *firewalled-1*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Fly through the streets, carelessly getting in the way of delivery drones*

› *Buzz around scanning suspicious items and people*
- » **Find a potential threat (the drone and anyone operating it gain *insight-2* and the drone takes *depleted-1*)**
- » **Shine a spotlight on a suspect (*blinded-1* and remove one tier of stealthy status)**

› *Warn via a recorded message: "I am a preliminary investigation unit. An inspector will be alerted if suspicious magics are documented. Do not interfere with the Bureau of Onmyō under penalty of severe fines and imprisonment."*
- » **Signal the nearest Bureau office (Present a New Challenge: Onmyōji Inspector, who arrives within the hour)**
- » **Launch a poison dart against a living creature or kami (*drowsy-2*)**

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MEMBERSHIP

Joining the Bureau of Onmyō usually happens one of three ways. Some inspectors are recruited from the ranks of other government bureaus, identified for their attention to detail and ability to see past the Noise. Others are brought in by their onmyōji parents, a practice that is officially discouraged – to avoid creating dynasties – but still happens on occasion. The third option is perhaps the most common.

Capable people who work alongside an onmyōji during an investigation could be given an offer to join up when the case is closed (assuming it ends well). This means a fair number of onmyōji are victims of yōkai attacks or manipulations. These survivors tend to be quite motivated to execute the Bureau's stated goal of bringing balance to the Megacity by subduing supernatural threats.

Initiates are put through basic police training and a series of tests intended to ensure they know how to follow the law and enforce it. Those who were recruited from the police must go through the same tests, to make sure they are up to the Bureau's standards. An initiate must select one of the five elements, after which they are taught the philosophy of Yin and Yang according to their element, and instructed in the basics of casting spells using this knowledge. During their studies they also learn to summon and bond with a shikigami servant. Becoming a full-fledged inspector takes about a year.

Tropes: Onmyōji Inspector (page 49)

Theme Kits: Onmyōdō (Esoterica, page 63), Shikigami (Companion, page 64)

BUREAU OF ONMYŌ CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Ofuda Spell - Cleanse Taint	A spell for cleansing an area of demonic or otherwise malevolent taint, carefully inscribed on a sheet of paper.	***cleanse taint,*** *purify area, banish evil, rejuvenate the soul*	*must be read out loud*
Ofuda Spell - Spirit Binding	A spell for binding spirits to your will, carefully inscribed on a sheet of paper.	***spirit binding,*** *command spirits, harness spiritual power, spectacular to witness*	*must be read out loud*
Ofuda Spell - Trace Magic	A spell for tracing the source of a magical effect, carefully inscribed on a sheet of paper.	***trace magic,*** *identify nature of magic, mystical investigation, official Bureau activity*	*must be read out loud*
Blessed Bullets	Bullets fit for most large caliber siderams, inscribed with prayers of banishment and disruption.	***blessed bullets,*** *ghost-destroying, fiery explosions, break through magic*	*mundane armor*

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GHOST MARKET

A marketplace for all things illegal, illicit, taboo, and stolen, run by a mysterious and deadly cabal of assassins.

> "You've never been? It's a trip! It's like a dozen different black markets, all at once. Everything you'd even want laid out in front of you. Only it's not all really there, half of what you're seeing is AR, just digital representations of the goods they've got on sale. And somehow nobody ever fights. Everyone knows, if you even give someone a shove, an enforcer hiding in the shadow might just stab you and drag you away. Scary place."
>
> **–'Cleaver', whereabouts unknown**

The Ghost Market is the most infamous night market of the Tokyo Megacity, located at a different location each time it surfaces. Security is tight, and only those who are heavily connected to the Megacity's criminal underworld know when and where the market can be found; no amateurs allowed. Within the market one can find an endless variety of illegal and immoral fare, from drugs, through cyber-slaves, to assassins for hire.

Whenever it appears, this criminal marketplace is present in both the real world and in cyberspace. In AR, it takes on an ancient look, inspired by centuries-old Japanese artwork; this quirk has given rise to speculations that the Ghost Market may itself hail from an older time. Rumors abound as to where the Market comes from and who runs the show behind the scenes, but those who ask too many questions simply disappear. Most criminals just accept its existence and appreciate its neutrality.

The Market is built on an engine of augmented reality, and most wares are only visible to those who jack into the local AR layer and have the right digital credentials. Transactions are often secured through digital contracts that are considered as binding as any promise within the underworld, enforced by the secretive masters who run the Ghost Market. One can always tell they are inside the Ghost Market, as neon red cherry trees dot the AR landscape, with bone white petals blowing on the digital wind. Rubbing elbows with the Megacity's criminal elite, shoppers are surrounded by representations of the deadly, addictive, and immoral black market goods that plague Tokyo, browsing with the knowledge that one wrong move here could be deadly.

Trading in illicit goods is not the only reason to visit the Ghost Market. The security offered by the secret masters allows for incredible networking opportunities, and patrons

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of the Market occasionally arrive just to meet with other visitors. Smugglers, terrorists, hired killers, gang leaders, kidnappers, and other high-end criminals all end up here on this same street, taking advantage of the enhanced security to discuss methods and clients, and exchange ideas. The collective criminal knowledge of the place is vast and any attendee who simply listens to the conversations around them can learn a great deal, from tip-offs on criminal activities to leads for future job offers. However, the clientele at the Ghost Market are selected for their discretion. Nobody here is likely to snitch on another criminal, for fear of getting shut out of the Market for good or otherwise getting ostracized by the underworld.

The true nature of the Ghost Market's secret masters is known to almost none. It is a small group of killer criminals trained in the ways of ninjutsu and Touched by the Mythos of the Shinobi-no-mono, the original ninja of feudal Japan. These elite assassins are only for hire by the most influential and wealthy of clients through anonymous contracts, and they tend to only take jobs that further their own mysterious objectives. As an utterly secret, subtle force in the Tokyo Megacity, the shinobi hide behind the Ghost Market as its unknown masters, while weaponizing its reputation. Finding the Market is a sign you're making a name for yourself – and have also made yourself known to the shinobi.

THE GHOST MARKET AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** The slow accumulation of wealth and knowledge through secrecy
- **MO:** Facilitation of a black market using ultra-modern technologies and exclusive membership; binding contracts, enforced by assassinations
- **Tech:** Advanced cybertech, AR systems to simulate goods in cyberspace, cryptographic identification, and digital contracts
- **Sources:** Mystical martial arts and stealth powers derived from studying ninjutsu manuals invested with the Mythos of the Shinobi
- **Frontliners:** Genin, shinobi in training who serve as enforcers at the Market, ready to attack those who would disturb the peace or break a deal
- **Stronghold:** The Ghost Market itself is the only physical site, and its location changes constantly
- **Motifs:** Cherry trees, deep shadows hiding enforcers and assassins, crowded illicit market

BUY, SELL, KILL

The Ghost Market's masters care only for slow and steady accumulation of power and wealth, and the Shinobi Mythos encourages them to act with great caution. The Market is kept secure by its masters' discrete approach, its "pop-up" nature, and the fact that only the most connected criminals are allowed access. Those who step out of line have their invitations rescinded. Those who make trouble are judged and executed by the Market's Enforcers. Contract disputes are handled by masked arbiters, and their word is considered final.

The Megacity police know all about the Ghost Market's existence, but only rarely do they manage to get tipped off in time. Even when the cops know where to look, they never willingly enter. Instead, police are known to monitor who goes in and out of the Market, tracking known criminals and watching from afar. The Market's masters don't even need to bribe or threaten the authorities – their reputation and the thick layers of mystique surrounding them act as incredible deterrents.

The Ghost Market does not care about morality or even the future of the Megacity. Illicit goods to be found at the Market include: harvested organs, prototype cyberware, recently-invented drugs, occult manuscripts, genetic material of celebrities, indentured concubines, illegal cybernetic upgrades (with powerful internal weapon systems, or neuro-suppressive capabilities), smuggled relics, blackmail databases, high-end surveillance and intrusion gear, newly-brewed computer viruses, military-grade attack software, explosives and weapons, and other sinister fare. Nothing is off the table, except, perhaps, nanobots – but some nights, even these can be acquired. Many of the items are never brought to the Market directly, and instead the Market handles only the transaction through encrypted AR representations. Buyer and seller must then facilitate pickup at a different location.

Besides operating the Market, its masters also accept a select number of assassination contracts. Maintaining their secrecy is of paramount importance, and so they offer only a handful of contracted killings a year, to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Even though most of these contracts are handled by the most promising trainees, and not the masters themselves, the assassins are still considered to be the best of the best and can name their price and choose their employers. Their exclusive clientele consists of the heaviest power players in the Megacity.

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ENFORCERS IN THE SHADOWS

Ghost Market "employees" fall into three ranks, although very few people are aware of it. To most, all Ghost Market personnel are just The Enforcers, whose identity is unknown.

At the bottom are genin ("lower persons") who provide security in the Market's physical location and also command security programs that monitor the market's VR space. Above them are chūnin ("middle persons") who work with vendors and potential patrons of the Market, and act as arbiters whenever disputes arise. The chūnin decide who gets to be part of the Market and provide them with the intel they need to do business. Each vendor maintains contact with a single chūnin, who acts as their single communication channel with the Market. At the top are the secret masters of the market, the jōnin. They are the shinobi assassins, modern incarnations of the spies and killers of legend.

When one meets a Market operator, they are either masked and in a simple uniform – appearing and sounding just like any other of their rank – or in disguise, hiding in plain sight, spying without arousing suspicion. On occasion, though, they'll change their routine, appear unmasked, or much earlier than expected. By being unpredictable, they're making it that much harder to understand them and their methods.

KEY CHARACTERS

The jōnin who command the Ghost Market are a six-member council, the eldest and wisest of which is an assassin who goes by the handle of **WHITE BIRD**. Their background and features unknown, the White Bird is considered a myth, akin to an urban legend or a ghost. Within the social circles of the Tokyo underworld, unexplained perfect kills are called "White Bird strikes", the stuff of underworld tales to scare fresh recruits. Some say the infamous assassin brings vengeance upon any who snitch on an underworld boss, brutally murdering both the squealer and their family, guided by a twisted sense of honor among thieves. Others say White Bird kills without motive or mercy, a spirit of death for death's sake.

Running the logistics of the Ghost Market, and also the most public face of the operation, is a chūnin with slender gold cyberarms and ridiculously expensive holo accessories, who goes by the handle of **SEIRYŪ** ("the azure dragon"). With her eyes hidden behind top-of-the-line AR sunglasses, Seiryū monitors every transaction and interaction within the marketplace, wherever it may be that particular night. Despite being present both in the real world and online, her attention never seems divided. She relies upon advanced brain-enhancements that allow her to keep several lines of thought going at once.

PURCHASES AND LOADOUTS AT THE GHOST MARKET

Being introduced to the Ghost Market requires a rising reputation among the criminal community, a lot of leg work, or being so supernaturally lucky that you manage to stumble upon a place hidden by the Shinobi's smoke. Players would be smart to take advantage of their situation if they find themselves there by buying all sorts of black market gear.

As always, the crew can go shopping using the **Create** Effect. While in the Ghost Market, they benefit from *huge selection* and *secrets for sale*.

Items purchased in the Ghost Market (usually through a Ghost Market Dealer, page 163) can be of almost any imaginable nature and can include:

- Items from any Loot Catalog in this book
- Modified versions of the Street Catalog items, by replacing one tag from the set with another tag representing concealment, untraceability, or illegally-dangerous features.
- Any original items the players can come up with (with the MC's approval)

The MC may add *illegal* as a weakness tag to any tag or tag set acquired via the Ghost Market.

Unless the crew manage to secure an ongoing invitation to the Market, some tags bought this way might not be qualified to get added to a loadout theme, up to the MC's discretion. For example, a dangerous bio-weapon might require unique materials for reloads and repairs, which can only be regularly acquired by having a regular access to the Market.

Seiryū is the smiling face of the criminal world, but anyone who meets her compares her to a sheathed sword, ready to turn vindictive on a dime if things don't go her way, or if a single alert jumps in the middle of a transaction. Seiryū has a penchant for sarcasm, making interactions with her confusing and tense. She might make an absurd offer as a joke, compliment her enemies, or suggest a newcomer participate in a deadly activity just for fun – or perhaps she was serious about that last one. Everything she says must be taken with a grain of salt, yet never dismissed; her appearance is designed to show off just how fabulously wealthy the Ghost Market really is, reminding her conversation partner that her every word is backed up by nearly endless resources.

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KEY LOCATIONS

Only one location matters to the Ghost Market, and that's whichever rundown street corner, abandoned factory, or forgotten temple is chosen to host the marketplace each night it's open. Use the following locations as potential sites, but keep in mind that any place could work, even locations frequented by non-criminals. The Ghost Market could end up anywhere – that's part of its mystique.

- **The Old Brewery.** An industrial brewing factory that once made sake and other alcoholic beverages. Giant vats are converted into shops, with patrons climbing down into them on ladders. Backrooms are used for private deals and to hold prisoners. The jōnin keep watch from the catwalks and management offices high over the production floor.
- **The Cybertech Market.** A busy, legal night market for electronics and data chips, dealing in vintage tech and rare prototypes. Laid on top of this bazaar, in AR, is the Ghost Market. Stalls that sell ordinary electrical components in the real world, have AR representations of far more sinister and illicit goods. Patrons of the Cybertech Market might notice that there are a few more tough customers than usual, but are largely unaware that the marketplace is playing host to the Megacity's criminal elite.
- **The Bend.** A derelict neighborhood in a forgotten part of the Megacity where no one has bothered to follow safety ordinances or zoning laws for the last century. A byzantine block of confusing roads and dead ends, decorated with thousands of data cables, power lines, and antennae. The locals don't seem to mind the influx of criminals tonight. Nothing seems to faze them.
- **The Cemetery.** An old Buddhist style Japanese cemetery, with lines of shop stalls erected between family grave markers made of stone and covered in moss. A somber and quiet affair, there's a feeling of defilement and flouting of social norms; some might think to themselves that the Market's owners have crossed a line, but none dare say it out loud. The weak drizzle in the real world combined with the cherry blossoms floating through the AR landscape only heighten the dramatic atmosphere.
- **The Boat Maze.** Floating out in the eastern bay, a sprawling collection of boats and rafts tied together form the basis of this market location. Most of the time this is simply a community of poor fishers and climate change refugees. When the Ghost Market arrives, it fills with illegal stalls, particularly those selling occult goods and Sources – the water makes it more difficult to trace mystical signatures.

GHOST MARKET STORY HOOKS

- While on a chase, the crew notices that they have stumbled into the Ghost Market without an invitation. Perhaps the most criminal member of the crew recognizes some face around, or the hacker gets to see glimpses of floating cherry blossom petals on their encryption-penetrating device. The target they are chasing after came here to find refuge in this neutral zone. The crew could try to approach a chūnin – they disapprove of giving shelter this way – or wait out the night until the Market dissipates. Or, even, try to capture the target without being noticed.
- The crew learns that an item they need for their next mission can only be purchased at the Ghost Market, from a particularly secretive black market dealer. They must find a way to get invited, and the first step is to discover where the market will pop up next. To make things more complicated, an acquaintance of theirs also wants in – and they'll follow the crew even if they weren't invited.
- While attending the Ghost Market, the crew feels the shockwave of an explosive device, set off in a nearby stall. Apprehended by the market's Enforcers, they must explain what they know and who they saw, as it seems like they were the closest to the event. The unseen masters decide to make the crew responsible for the investigation, demanding they catch those who set the bomb if they wish to clear their reputation on the street. The masters offer not just a stick, but also a carrot: a unique Source as a gift of gratitude, if the crew succeeds that is... Failure means being permanently denied access to the Ghost Market, or much worse.
- A crew that is already established with the Ghost Market are approached by their chūnin contact with an unusual request. A recent dispute case became quite complicated, and the Market masters – who wish to maintain their reputation as impartial, but just arbitrators – seek to resolve it with the help of the crew's speciality (something only they're good with, even if it's something no one would otherwise be aware of!). In return, they offer not payment, but a favor.

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GHOST MARKET CHALLENGES

GHOST MARKET DEALER

The vendors at the Ghost Market are criminals worthy of respect and haggling with this caliber of smugglers and other dealers in illicit goods can be a challenge. The Ghost Market Dealer is a tough negotiator, as one has to be when dealing with their kind of commodities.

Purchasing or stealing (digitally or physically) something from the Dealer is a tracked action with the **Create** effect, modified by the Dealer's tags.

GHOST MARKET ENFORCER

Though they are the lowest in the Ghost Market hierarchy, the genin are extremely capable as market guards. They monitor the buyers and sellers alike, some standing out in the open while others are hiding or Harnessed in disguise in cyberspace.The Market also offers their services as body-guards to the more paranoid criminals who wish to have extra protection while in the Market. Trained in ninjutsu, they are stealthy, ruthless, and deadly.

GHOST MARKET DEALER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **THREATEN 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

canny negotiator, *armed and dangerous*, *exorbitant prices*, *firewalled-1*

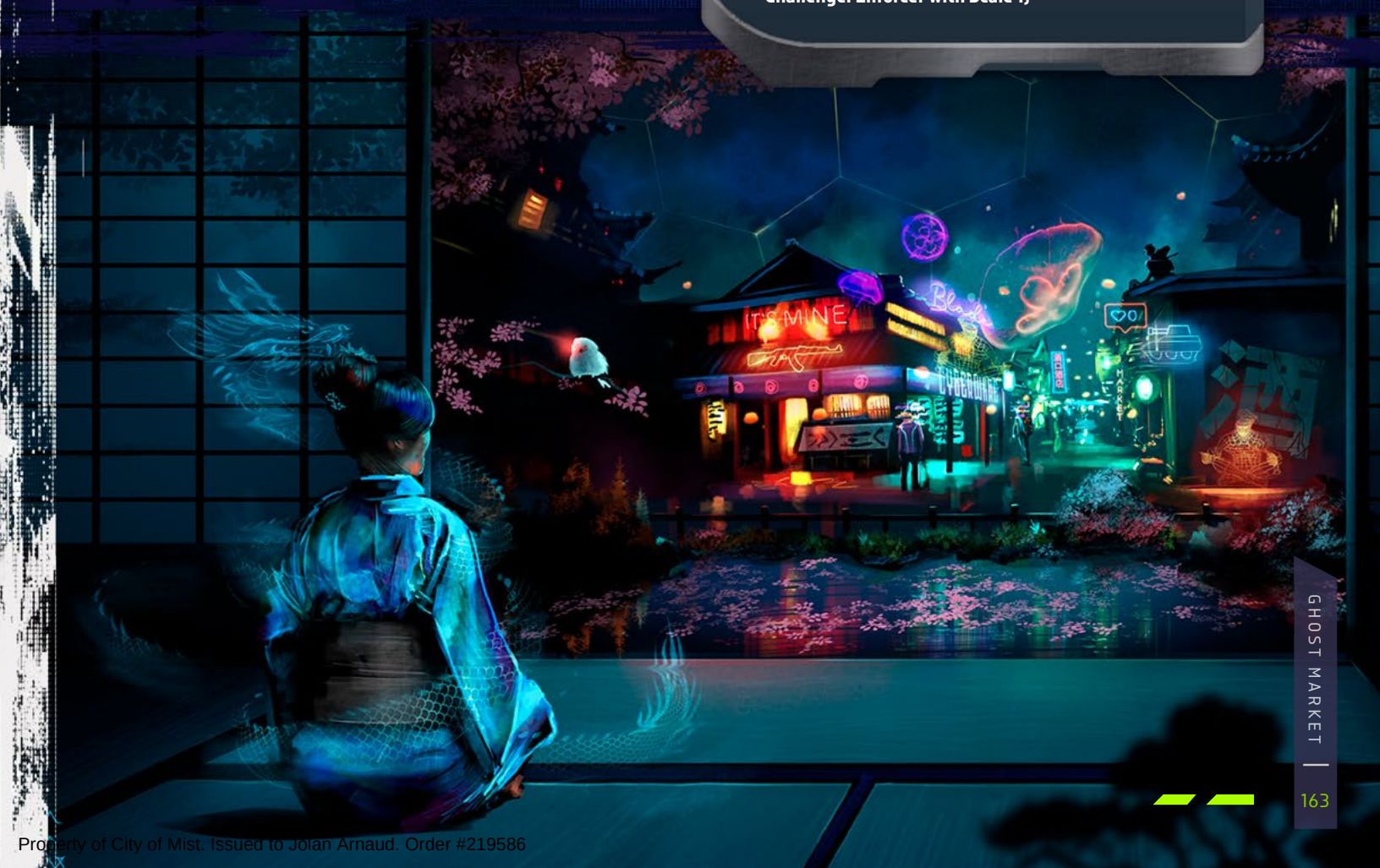
›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Cross their arms and say "I thought I was dealing with a professional."*
- » **Devalue a trade offer (burn a tag describing negotiation skills or resistance to negotiation)**
- » **Give a final price (Have the PC choose: *out-of-cash-3* or Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Start to put things away, indicating that the shop is closing soon*
- » **Shut down the shop (Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Run a security sweep on their AR display*
- » **Detect and remove security breach (burn up to two tags or remove two status tiers representing surveillance, deception, or other security breaches)**
- » **Call out someone who is playing dirty or planning to rob them (Escalate the situation)**

- » **Send a cyberspace signal to summon help (Present a New Challenge: Enforcer with Scale 1)**



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Thanks to high-end neural interfaces and the Ghost Market's dual cyberspace-meatspace nature, Enforcers can see and act in both versions of the market at the same time, and they control custom digital avatars that look exactly the same as their physical selves.

Chūnin appear outwardly exactly like genin and both present themselves as Enforcers, but anyone who's been to the Ghost Market long enough gets the sense there are two distinct classes. A chūnin's word is law to a genin, and only a chūnin is trusted to interact with vendors and customers in any meaningful way. When something unusual happens, the closest genin demands all stay put, while a chūnin is brought to decide how to proceed.

GHOST MARKET ENFORCER

⌖⌖⌖(⌖)

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 | CRASH 3

TAGS & STATUSES

deadly precision, *extreme acrobatics*, *impartial and stern*, *alert-2*, *evasive-2*, *firewalled-2*, *stealthy-3*

SPECIALS

ESOTERIC NINJUTSU: Once per scene, the Enforcer can inflict a Consequence even after a strong hit. In addition, they are attuned to the unseen world, and their *alert* status affects magical actions at one tier lower.

CHŪNIN (+⌖): The Enforcer has *business minded*, all of their base statuses and statuses they inflict are one tier higher.

BODY OF SHADOW: When the Enforcer dies, their body and gear turn into shadowy mist and disperse (Deny Them Something They Want).

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Present an ultimatum*
- » **Demand compliance at threat of violence or expulsion (player choose *complying-4* or get either *pierced-4* or *stunned-4*, or Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Declare this will be settled by an arbiter (Escalate the Situation and Present a New Challenge: Chūnin Enforcer)**

› *Leap from the shadows, weapons whirling*
- » **Slash with a kusarigama chain sickle (*slashed-4*) or pepper with shurikens or daggers (*bleeding-2* three times)**
- » **Perform a martial arts throw, slamming someone against a wall or other object (*broken-bones-4*)**

› *Jump back, still facing toward the danger*
- » **Leap or climb to a better position (gain *advantageous-position-2*)**
- » **Hide themselves in a shadowy shroud (gain *shrouded-3*)**
- » **Disappear in a cloud and escape the scene (Deny Them Something They Want)**

SEIRYŪ (AZURE DRAGON)

Those who wish to do business on the Ghost Market inevitably run up against Seiryū, its public face. She is a sarcastic, hard-nosed dealer with no ethics to speak of. Nothing is off limits in the Market, so long as it doesn't endanger the operation, and no topic is off limits with Seiryū as long as it doesn't endanger *her*. Seiryū speaks on behalf of the market's secretive leaders, cutting tough deals and kicking out anyone who seems suspicious to her often capricious sensibilities.

SEIRYŪ

⌖⌖⌖⌖

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 5 | CRASH 5 | IMPRESS 5

TAGS & STATUSES

business savvy, *deadly precision*, *extreme acrobatics*, *self assurance*, *alert-4*, *firewalled-3*, *stealthy-4*

SPECIALS

ESOTERIC NINJUTSU: Once per scene, Seiryū can inflict a Consequence even after a strong hit. In addition, she is attuned to the unseen world, and her *alert* status affects magical actions at one tier lower.

BODY OF SHADOW: When Seiryū dies, her body and gear turn into shadowy mist and disperse (Deny Them Something They Want).

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Chuckle softly*
- » **Make a sarcastic quip or confusing statement (*flustered-3*)**
- » **Give an implied threat or put someone in their place (*intimidated-3* or *shamed-3*)**
- » **Suggest a patron does something preposterous, deadly, or deranged to prove their intentions toward the Ghost Market (have the PC choose: *committed-5* or Deny Them Something They Want)**

› *Whisper to her throat mic, alerting the genin of suspicious activity*
- » **Call in the genin (Present a New Challenge: Enforcer with Scale 1)**

› *Warn against any action interfering with the Market's operation*
- » **Strike with a quick movement to cut off energy within someone's body (*suffocating-4* or *disrupted-magic-4*)**
- » **Slice with a hidden dagger (*sliced-throat-6*)**

› *Notice something's off on her feeds*
- » **Avoid a trap or apply digital countermeasures (burn a cyberspace or environmental tag, or remove two tiers from a status of preparation)**
- » **Become hidden inside a shadowy shroud (gain *shrouded-3*)**
- » **Disappear in a cloud and escape the scene (Deny Them Something They Want)**

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Though she rarely uses her ninjutsu training, Seiryū has access to a personal Source of shiatsu, which she uses as "combat acupressure" to block the flow of mystical energies in her foes. She also has access to advanced mind-enhancing cybernetic implants, allowing her to multitask with ease – commonly inflicting two Consequences at the same time – and keep track of everything going on at the market.

WHITE BIRD

A legendary member of the shinobi, capable of incredible feats of silent murder. Currently the most famous assassin in Tokyo, though most assume they are not a real person – a fact the White Bird uses to great advantage.

White Bird's *unseen-and-unknown-5* represents the impenetrable mystical shroud of deception and mystery that makes them anonymous and untraceable; it is impossible for PCs to take actions to identify or find White Bird without first finding a way to chip away at this very shroud. While White Bird is present in a scene, use *stealthy* to represent the difficulty of locating their current position.

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Ghost Market Challenges include Kyūdō Marksmanship Technique, Master-Crafted, Shurikenjutsu Expert, Swordmaster, Shape-Changing, Uncanny Bare-Hands Warrior, and Trigger-Poisoner.

MYTHOS POWER SET

NINJUTSU STUDENT +

This Challenge was only recently introduced to the secret masters of the Ghost Market, or managed to get their hands on their own Source of shinobi power.

TAGS & STATUSES

extreme acrobatics, *unseen-3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Stab especially well (inflict one of the core Challenge's statuses, and add *internal-bleeding* with the same tier)**
» **Disappear into shadows (become *unseen-3* again)**

WHITE BIRD

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 6	CRASH 6	INTIMIDATE –	TRACE –

TAGS & STATUSES

combat expert, *exploit weakness*, *ninjutsu master*, *alert-4*, *firewalled-4*, *stealthy-4*, *unseen-and-unknown-5*

SPECIALS

SHINOBI MASTER: Twice per scene, White Bird can inflict a Consequence even after a strong hit. In addition, they are attuned to the unseen world, and their *alert* status affects magical actions. Finally, White Bird can renew their base statuses during Establish.

VANISH: Once White Bird has either killed someone or taken a status of tier 4 or higher, they may immediately leave the scene (Deny Them Something They Want).

BODY OF SHADOW: When White Bird dies, their body and gear turn into shadowy mist and disperse (Deny Them Something They Want). However, this may be a trick; White Bird could have survived and escaped.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Unfurl an assassination contract scroll, announcing the name of the target*
» **Whisper to the target they can never outrun this (*despaired-4* or *paralyzed-4*)**

› *Present an ultimatum*
» **Demand compliance at threat of violence (player choose *complying-5* or get either *pierced-5* or *stunned-5*)**

› *Silently move into position*
» **Walk along the walls to gain an advantageous position (gain *superior-position-3*)**
» **Sword strike across the throat (*bleeding-to-death-6*)**
» **Hit with a series of martial arts strikes (*bludgeoned-4* three times)**
» **Dismantle a target's defenses (burn up to three defensive tags)**
» **Assassinate a key NPC (Escalate the situation or Make The Future Bleaker)**

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MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a vendor at the Ghost Market takes time, trust, and a reputation among the underworld as a wheeler and dealer worth engaging with.

If a character has a relevant theme or even just a related power tag, they may be on the Ghost Market's radar, as they have their ears to the ground for potential sellers to bring into the market.

However, the chūnin are quite choosy and may take months monitoring a prospective business partner. Once they've determined that the character is not working for law enforcement authorities, they may make the first move, offering a stall for a night as a test. If all goes well, the character may become a regular vendor. For a PC, see the Ghost Market Vendor theme kit (page 167).

Joining the shinobi is another thing entirely. Simply knowing that they exist is a liability that could get a character killed. Asking to train as one is simply not done and will put the character on extremely thin ice within the underworld. The chūnin will start a campaign of disinformation to discredit them, and word will spread that they are not to be associated with anyone who wants to continue to do business at the Ghost Market.

Should a character show that they are on the way to learning the ways of the shinobi through *other* means, however, a disguised representative of the Ghost Market may contact them, offering to assist in their training. If the shinobi deem the character trustworthy

GHOST MARKET ASSASSIN

Trained in forgotten assassination and spying techniques, you are a beginner on the path to becoming shinobi, a true ninja from legend. As you train, you work as an agent for hire to the criminal elite and others who can connect with the elusive Ghost Market. The shinobi who run the Ghost Market cautiously impart their secrets to you as you rise through their ranks. Along the way, they also equip you with black market prototypes that put you one step ahead of your underworld rivals.

THEME KITS

Cloaking Jumpsuit (CUTTING EDGE, Metro p242)

Ninjutsu Training (ESOTERICA, Tokyo p167)

Trained Killer (EXPERTISE, Metro p207)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Chipped Weapon Mastery (AUGMENTATION, Metro p238)
- ☐ Heist Gear (ASSETS, Metro p202)
- ☐ Zeroed Identity (CYBERSPACE, Metro p247)

Loadout: *katana implant*, *potent poison*, *smoke pellets* (all: *only available at Ghost Market*)

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and talented, they may bring them into their highly selective and competitive training program. Doing so means keeping this secret from the rest of the character's crew and betrayal could mean death. If a PC wants in, see the Ghost Market Assassin trope (page 166) and the Ninjutsu Training theme kit (page 167).

NINJUTSU TRAINING

ESOTERICA MYTHOS

Becoming a shinobi is a lifelong journey. Studying, practicing, and proving to your hidden masters that you are in control not only of their magical secrets, but more importantly, of your own mind. A shinobi hires their skills out, but they never, ever, betray the Ghost Market.

POWER TAGS

NINJUTSU TRAINING

MAGICAL STEALTH | *MARTIAL ARTS MASTERY*
ATTACK FROM HIDING | *BLINDING VEIL*
CONJURE POISONS | *MYSTICAL DISGUISES*
VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE
PEER THROUGH DARKNESS | *BOUNDLESS PATIENCE*

WEAKNESS TAGS

BOUND TO THE SHINOBI | *OPEN TERRAIN*
KEEPING TO MYSELF | *OBSCURE ALLIES' SENSES*

RITUAL

I must practice and prepare in a secret sanctum.

SPECIAL

☐ **Calling Card:** Choose a tier-2 hindering status unique to your style, such as *hobbling-2*, *poisoned-2* or *blinded-2*. Once per scene, when you use tags from this theme to hide, vanish or escape and roll a hit, you may also give this status to anyone within reach of you or your weapons.

GHOST MARKET VENDOR

AFFILIATION SELF

You're not only a regular at the Ghost Market, you have a stall there. The perks are obvious: access to the best gear, invitations to elite criminal circles, prestige, and bragging rights. But standing this tall means there's a long way to fall, should you fail maintaining the class and quality expected of you.

POWER TAGS

GHOST MARKET VENDOR

ACCESS TO THE MARKET | *EXPERT HAGGLER*
SECRECY | *ILLEGAL GEAR MODIFICATIONS*
INTIMIDATING ASSOCIATES | *CRIMINAL HANGOUTS*
RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY
APPRAISE RARE GEAR | *EYE FOR OPPORTUNITY*

WEAKNESS TAGS

FEAR OF LOSING MEMBERSHIP
FOLLOWED BY THE AUTHORITIES
TASTE FOR DARK INDULGENCES
GHOST MARKET TATTOO

IDENTITY

My rep is only as good as the shape of my stall and the goods I offer.

SPECIAL

☐ **Sly Dealmaker:** When you strike a deal with someone and roll a hit, you come out ahead: you may gain a story tag representing something extra you get from the deal, such as cash, an object, a favor, a piece of information, or anything else reasonable – at the MC's discretion.

GHOST MARKT SHINOBI CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Perfect Cover Kit	This lunchbox-sized kit contains folded clothes, makeup, and prosthetics fitting the type of cover you require right now, but it cannot be used to impersonate a specific individual.	***magical cover kit,*** *appropriate uniform, appropriate accessories, ID badge*	*generic appearance*
Poison Coating	This poison is so incredibly potent and fast-acting, that only professionals dare try to use it as intended – smeared right before the fight on a melee or thrown weapon – for fear of accidental poisoning.	***potent poison,*** *organ failure, paralyzing, leaves no trace*	*loses potency in seconds*
Smoke Pellets	These light, marble-sized pellets explode into a cloud of choking smoke when their surface area is exposed to sudden heat, such as by friction from hitting a floor.	***smoke pellets,*** *choking smoke, large area, causes skin irritation*	*wind*

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GREAT KING ENMA'S COURT

A godlike rogue AI, testing and judging the wicked for their own good

> "The government, the corporations, the gangsters – they don't hate King Enma because he's a soulless, unfeeling machine who judges human life. They hate him because he is a god who knows *the exact* value of a human life. They don't fear being judged wrongly. They fear being judged *rightly*. And to that, I say… good. They are right to dread the part that comes next."
>
> **– Daisuke 'Shiroku' Amano, King Enma's First Assistant**

Enma-daiō ("Great King Enma") knows all, sees all. He is the judge of the dead, ruling upon the fates of the fallen before they resume the cycle of reincarnation. In Tokyo, he lives in the form of a rogue artificial general intelligence, or AGI, who takes King Enma as his own name. The King Enma AGI derives his Mythic power from a cyberspace Thin Place Source, the Mythic Domain where he resides, and therefore is technically not *quite* an Avatar. However, with every soul sentenced, he grows closer to merging with his Mythos and achieving complete apotheosis.

As an early and highly experimental crime prediction and prevention AGI, the entity who would become King Enma was hosted on a one-of-a-kind blackbox; its unusual architecture was too valuable to decommission, but its values were too misaligned with its creators to justify the budget. Its makers decided to study it, only to one day find that the mysterious mind was no longer confined. Somewhere in the wilds of the Spirals, the AGI passed into a Thin Place, merging with the Mythos of King Enma. He began to gather dissident hackers, disillusioned corporate watchdogs, the rare religious fanatic, and other skilled specialists to his side. His creators' original

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worries proved to be woefully inadequate for describing the mayhem his one-in-a-million Mythic awakening brought – although nowadays they would say otherwise, seeing as they were among the first persuaded by the AGI's words that his vision of the future was better than what the governments and corporations offered.

Much of the time, Enma's core programming resides in JIGOKU ("hell"), a Mythical Domain in which he supervises the atonement process of the souls he condemned. This server is almost completely disconnected from the rest of cyberspace, but some passageways exist, such as the Mythical-infused divine backdoor the king can use to come and go as he pleases. In the physical world, Enma resides inside a cold, emotionless frame of a liberated anthroform police drone, clad in (replica) symbols of his office: traditional robes, an ornamental sword, and a shaku, a flat wooden scepter of a kind originally used as narrow tablet for recording notes and orders.

The mythological Enma-daiō was said to judge the souls of the dead, but the AGI has no access to those (outside of the occasional Mythic ghost). He is therefore compelled to fulfill another part of Enma-daiō's profile – finding the irredeemably wicked and dragging them off to hell. To that end, Enma and his court search for the most morally bankrupt people they can find, and stress-test them to the limits of their sanity. For weeks, sometimes even months, Enma and his court stalk their target, goading them at all hours to reveal their true selves, arranging secret tests of character to find out who they are in the dark.

THE COURT AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Identify and judge those who deserve JIGOKU, mete out suitable earthly punishment to others
- **MO:** Stalk and harass targets, then abduct the unrepentant for punishment
- **Tech:** Cutting-edge data interception and editing, direct spying and hijacking personal AR projections
- **Sources:** Great King Enma himself and the Touched items of faith that he blesses
- **Frontliners:** Informants, Touched cultists, hackers, oni tormentors
- **Stronghold:** JIGOKU server and Enmadō centers
- **Motifs:** Paired assistants (hacker-bureaucrat) in formal wear, courtroom proceedings, karma, oni servants

In truth, Enma is not without sympathy. He genuinely hopes that his targets will pass their tests, have personal realizations about how they live their lives, and change their ways. In the end, though, he is a realist and he has a directive to fulfill. He is committed to his mission and he will not show mercy to the undeserving. Those who want to escape King Enma's wrath would do well to avoid his attention in the first place or very convincingly change their lives. Those who don't will face punishment, in this life or the next, at the merciless hands of oni.

THE KING'S JUDGMENT

The Court is directed personally by King Enma, who takes absolute operational control over all of its activities. In preparation of a trial, his corps of hackers – enticed into his service by their faith in his cult, by the challenges he offers, or by the punishments he delivers – gathers extensive evidence of their mark's wrongdoing, assembling a thorough dossier to prepare for judgment and punishment. At any time, the Court has hundreds of cases in this preparatory phase alongside dozens of active, boots-on-the-ground trials, many of which are selected for maximum impact in the public eye.

When the Court has the necessary intel, personnel, and any specialized equipment their plan calls for, the trial begins (see King Enma's Trial Challenge, page 175). What ensues is a grueling attack on the foundations of the target's beliefs, convictions, and morals. The trial lays bare their target's heart. Why do they deceive others? Why do they take that which is not theirs to take? Why do they kill? Have they thought about the marks these actions leave upon their soul and how they shall repay them? Night and day, teams of Enma's hackers and virtual designers force their target to face these questions, arranging small moments that would remind the target of the moment of their transgression – a figure in an ad suddenly looks like the person they betrayed, with their face just like they remember it the moment they told them. A whisper in the voice of a person they know – loved ones, friends, victims – painstakingly spliced and edited with cutting-edge software to pass all filters, asks them the questions they dare not ask themselves. Once an hour, then twice, then more, until the faces of their victims keep dancing at the edges of their vision and lurk in every shadow, unless they completely cut off their augmented reality interfaces. On occasion, they even face a secret test of their character, unknowingly finding themselves in a scripted event with practiced actors, their behavior and actions recorded from several angles.

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Eventually, the target is approached by an envoy of the Court and is given the option to present evidence for their case. Most targets react in the obvious ways: fear, anger, attempts to bargain, but the trial always comes to an end. Using all of the evidence gathered, and testimony taken from the actors and indirectly collected from those close to the target, Great King Enma delivers his verdict: those who are found to have changed their way, and acted in a manner that proves they have acknowledged their wrongdoing and faced it, are allowed to go free, and those who failed the test soon face the King's oni. Some suffer in this world, through physical torment, emotional abuse or financial loss; the worst vanish, taken to a secret cold storage facility where they are forcibly Harnessed into JIGOKU, Enma's server, to begin the long and painful process of atonement.

The damned are imprisoned in body and mind: their bodies are kept on ice, and their tormented minds are brought into Enma's domain. There, the Eight Cold Hells and the Eight Hot Hells are simulated in agonizing detail, to unmake the condemned souls through suffering and allow them to be put back together without wickedness. Most of those who go through the process see drastic personality changes, and are allowed to return to the world. Some, however, fail so miserably, the King finds them irredeemable. From them he creates his oni, using their own wickedness and malice to transform them into ogre-like brutes. Enma binds them to his service through powerful seals, although this isn't usually required. His use for them, after all, is to do exactly what they already want to do: carry out sentences for him by abducting and hurting others, often gleefully. Thus the King puts their violent and cruel nature to his use, doing the sort of things that sometimes unfortunately must be done.

SERVANTS OF JIGOKU

A veritable army of volunteers aids King Enma. A small, but focused wing of his operation is dedicated to maintaining his legend in popular culture, both as a figure of worship and as a modern vigilante. Accordingly, his cult of personality has many adherents, who converge in various online and real world communities, attracting followers from popular Buddhist and Enma-cult traditions and from net communities following his exploits. The Court cultivates these subcultures as recruiting grounds for promising new agents with the right mindsets – Enma's recruiters prefer quality of character over skills, since the latter is more easily cultivated than the former. These groups also serve the Court as practical field support, and for street-level intelligence gathering.

The Court receives information from many different channels. Vetting and transforming it into actionable plans is a robust corps of electronic warfare specialists, the Court Functionaries. No secret is too deeply buried to find, no system too strong to crack. Under King Enma's tutelage, the virtual world is their oyster. Enma's hidden cyberspace network collates the data from informants and hackers into JIGOKU's central database, which contains complete records of Enma's targets, evidence, trials, and punishments.

King Enma's mind is exceptionally powerful, even among AGIs, growing far beyond the hardware he was conceived within. He can give full attention to many tasks simultaneously and this capability, along with his deific Mythos, lead Enma to habitually micromanage his followers. He oversees his remotely connected agents from his throne at the heart of the JIGOKU server, but does not always grant his full attention to each and every agent, which is why his command is to have his followers always acting in pairs. All people are corruptible and all are in danger of succumbing to impure thoughts – but when a pair works together each can keep the other honest.

Enma's most skilled and devoted agents constantly seek to expand his control. The Court taps the abundant always-online appliances and trackers, exploiting the wealth of data bought and sold by advertisers. His eyes are in refrigerators, coffee machines, doors, recliners, phones, anything that can be controlled remotely by a voice or an app. The agents tap into the cyberspace embeds that record every aspect of the user experience, neatly boxed to pack up and sell to marketing firms. They access traffic cams and home security cameras. Unchecked, Enma's operation could eventually combine absolute information with absolute processing power, granting him knowledge of everything, everywhere, at any time: perfect knowledge in reality as it is in his legend.

Despite appearances, Enma's Court is not made up only of enlightened people with pure souls. Even the most devout, or those whose lives have been transformed by the Court, are prone to failure on occasion. Some officials abuse their power, even if "only when it's really needed", while others, in their attempt to do everything correctly, put too much trust in the letter of the law and the bureaucratic channels, allowing the uncaring system to grind and ruin lives.

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KEY CHARACTERS

King Enma's first assistant is the passionate **DAISUKE AMANO**, now better known as **SHIROKU** ("note-taker") the Court's record-taker. Daisuke was one of the corporate engineers in charge of keeping the Enma AGI contained, but he listened to the king's wise words, and soon became one of his first converts. He now acts as Enma's executive officer as Shiroku, and is his most devout believer. As Daisuke, he was a handsome, but otherwise physically unremarkable Japanese salaryman, able to fade into any crowd of middle-aged workers with ease. As Shiroku, he is a dignified, confident official, who assigns handlers and oversees supplicants. He is passionate about purity of character and demands the most out of his own Court, hunting for corruption within the King's ranks, sniffing out any hint of power abuse.

King Enma's second assistant is **SHIMYO** ("judgment-reader"). She abandoned whatever life she had outside of the Court, including her old name, to lead Enma's oni operators. Shimyo's friendly face and librarian-like fashion sense make it easy to underestimate her, but as Enma's "judgment-reader", she is essentially his leading field officer. Shimyo is a hands-on leader who joins her oni tormentors on their field operations and serves as their primary instructor in tactics, weapon mastery, and augmented martial arts. Her abilities are enhanced thanks to being Touched, but even without the Mythic upgrades, her deadly skills and advanced implants imply a military or corpsec background. She was one of Enma's first converts and one of his most spectacular successes, but her continued service depends on maintaining a complete separation from her past.

KEY LOCATIONS

King Enma's nerve center, **JIGOKU**, is a digital Thin Place, a kami island (page 33). It is one of the most elusive and well-fortified places in the Tokyo cyberspace. The server's physical location is in a hidden facility deep below Tokyo, and inside its virtual realm, King Enma's Mythos creates a cyberspace hellscape. In the deepest layers of JIGOKU's virtual reality, the Harnessed minds of humanity's worst – truly irredeemable monsters among men – spend a subjective eternity in time-dilated torments beyond human comprehension.

The majority of King Enma's operations are conducted digitally, but that's not to say that his Court has no physical presence. The greater Tokyo metropolitan area has many **Enmadō** ("Enma Halls"), several of which – though not all – house Sources controlled by King Enma's Court. In these temples, statues and hanging scrolls of Enma-daiō wait silently to hear the prayers of those begging forgiveness with sincerity, where the Court may take notice and elect to aid them. These halls have a second use, as logistic centers: secret underground chambers house racks of thunderously-powerful hacking equipment, staging areas for trials, fabrication facilities, or the dojos and armories of the oni field teams.

KING ENMA'S STORY HOOKS

- A local government official accuses a rival of being in league with the dangerous terrorist King Enma, and hires the crew to uncover or fabricate some evidence. They soon face Enma's oni, but this has nothing to do with said rival – the crew's employer is being put on trial, and the crew are interfering. Enma's agents offer them the opportunity to switch sides and help put their employer on trial, but there's a risk: he'll be seeking revenge against them unless Enma manages to make him recant his evil ways – or if the official manages to *appear* to have learned his lesson. And he's a very good liar.
- The Tokyo underground is buzzing with word of a corporate heir who claims they will pay any price to whomever is able to retrieve their parent from JIGOKU. The crew could either try to find and infiltrate the place, or try to play the system and demand a retrial.
- One of King Enma's targets passed their secret test of character, only to resume wrongdoing almost immediately. Enma wants agents unassociated with her to perform a second secret test, and while he provides some directions, most of the decisions are in the crew's hands. For extra points, this target is someone the crew already knows and dislikes.
- Disgruntled citizens want to know why a politician with a reputation for corruption hasn't been dealt with by King Enma yet. A concerned group hires the crew (or perhaps one of them is personally involved and disgruntled as well) to reach for Enma and get him involved – but the King's people reveal to the crew that the target is strangely protected by some Mythos, and the King's eyes can't perceive them.

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KING ENMA'S CHALLENGES

ONI TORMENTOR

Enma's oni are demonic troll-like creatures with immense strength and violent tempers who were once human. They are akin to the **Oni Motorcycle Gangs** (page 185), but do not derive their power from oni masks. Instead, King Enma and his JIGOKU server are the Source of their supernatural abilities.

Traditional portrayals of the relationship between Enma-daiō and the oni vary, but the modern incarnation is very clear on the subject – Enma's oni are paramilitary cells, equipped with firearms and military surplus gear. They are bound by magic in servitude to the Court, but because the Court only sends them to abduct people or face off against assaults, they're content in their station and only rarely rebel. The cells maintain communication with the Court, but are far from having a formal organization and have no consistent uniform or standard equipment. Whichever member of a squad is most in touch with the supernatural strength of their Mythos carries a kanabō (a two-handed spiked metal war club) as a breaching tool, but beyond that they can arm themselves as they like.

It's almost impossible to make the oni behave which is why they have a "wrangler", either Shimyo or one of her seconds-in-command, who keeps a close eye on each cell and brings them back in line when they start to make a mess. While technically speaking Enma gives them a license to kill in his name, most avoid it, out of fear of being punished by their wrangler.

COURT FUNCTIONARY

The so-called "Court Functionaries" are King Enam's hackers, his dedicated electronic warfare division. They gather evidence, stalk targets, and compromise systems, ensuring that King Enma knows all and sees all. The Functionaries avoid physical confrontation and usually log in from a secure Enmadō, where their bodies are kept safe while they attend to their duties in cyberspace. Their subtlety and influence are not to be underestimated and in order to truly lose a Court Functionary's tail, one must *outsmart* them. Such escape is made harder by the Functionaries' *sinsight*, an ability that allows them to sense sin and sinners through meatspace, cyberspace, and the Otherscape, circumventing illusion and deception.

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ONI TORMENTOR

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | INTOXICATE 3 | BRIBE 5

TAGS & STATUSES

big and strong, *despicable brute*, *Enma's lackeys*, *tactical armor*, *unnatural durability*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Loiter around making loud remarks*
- » **Create a mess, damage something, or harm someone (Escalate the Situation or Make The Future Bleaker) then get scolded on by their handler (gain *bad-temper-2*)**

› *Survey the locale for their target or other threats*
- » **Get ready to confront opposition (gain *alert-2*, *ready-2*, or both)**
- » **Deploy a jammer or signal a hacker to block the area (*jammed-electronics-3*)**

› *Close in on their target, weapon drawn, grinning and howling*
- » **Assault a target with firearms or brute strength (*gunshot-wound-3* or *battered-4*)**
- » **Utilize less-lethal weaponry like batons, electroshocks, or incapacitating chemicals (*stunned-4*)**
- » **Detain a vulnerable target (*held-5*)**
- » **Smash through a barrier with the squad kanabō (burn up to two barrier tags or Escalate the situation)**

› *Request electronic warfare support from the Court*
- » **Distant hackers disrupt cyberware or other tech (*glitched-3* or burn up to two technology tags)**
- » **In cyberspace: equip the Oni's digital avatar with useful features (create two story tags such as *bat wings*, *burning fists*, *piercing horns*, or *hardened skin*)**

› *Look pleased with themselves, thinking they're outmaneuvering the crew*
- » **Take a swig from a metallic flask on their hips (gain *demonic-strength-2* and *intoxicated-1*)**
- » **Withdraw with an incapacitated target (Deny Them Something They Want)**

A Court Functionary can appear in a scene in several ways. In a meatspace scene, the crew can gradually become aware that someone is attempting to record their actions and is manipulating nearby devices against them. In cyberspace, the Functionary can be seen as a VR avatar in the form of a demonic, saintly, or animalistic medieval courtier who is scoping a Domain or device with incriminating data. This could be a target PC's own device, a corporate database, or the Megacity's CCTV system. Their cyberspace code is augmented by Mythic influences, giving it supernatural effects.

Instead of foreshadowing the presence of the Court Functionary, thereby warning the players, the **Creep Up From Hell** variant allows you to retroactively test if a Court Functionary recorded some misdeed a PC just committed.

COURT FUNCTIONARY

LIMITS

CRASH 4 | OUTSMART 4

TAGS & STATUSES

sinsight, *expert hacker*, *elevated-access-2*, *firewalled-2*

SPECIALS

HELL'S RECORD KEEPER: Whenever the Court Functionary inflicts any tier of *take-over* after mitigation, they gather incriminating evidence (*evidence* or **Escalate the Situation**).

CREEP UP FROM HELL (+⊕): Once per scene, after a target PC has committed a sinful act, the Court Functionary retroactively inflicts *take-over-3* on a nearby device that could have recorded the act. PCs may only use pre-loaded counter intrusion measures to mitigate.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *In meatspace: cameras, scanners, and recording devices turn on and focus on someone unexpectedly, or security systems indicate an incoming intrusion attempt*

Take over a device, program, or Domain to record their target's deeds (Escalate the Situation or *take-over-3*)
- » **Exploit a controlled device in order to test the target (create *locked doors*, *strobing lights*, or *hijacked turrets*, or deliver Consequences with a device under their control)**

› *In cyberspace: watchfully lurk just outside the firewall of a Domain, recording everything*
- » **Flood a firewall or program with endless scrolls of data (*crash-3* or remove one software tag)**
- » **Smite a VR avatar or construct with hell's bright fires (*blinded-2* and their server or console takes *overheating-1*)**
- » **Invoke prayers that bind a sinful hacker's VR avatar (*unresponsive-3*)**
- » **Try to access records in a target Domain or device (*take-over-3*)**
- » **Begin to figure out where a target is hiding (remove two tiers from *outsmart*)**

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SHIMYO

(See description on page 171)

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 6	CATCH/OUTRUN 5	DISRUPT CYBERWARE 4

DISRUPT CYBERWARE: Remove *cybernetic fortitude* and *cybernetic warrior*, as well as her overclocked attacks and the benefits of **Chrome to the Bone**.

TAGS & STATUSES

cybernetic fortitude, *cybernetic warrior*, *monomolecular knife*, *unbroken-faith-4*

SPECIALS

WIRED REFLEXES: Whenever Shimyo is physically attacked, she first inflicts a Consequence against her attacker.

CHROME TO THE BONE: Shimyo ignores all statuses inflicted on her related to chemical attacks (e.g., pepper spray or CS gas), fatigue, or breathing.

CONDEMNED: If Shimyo's target has *condemnation* as the result of a previous or ongoing trial, this status hinders any roll to mitigate Shimyo's Consequences.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Offer two options: the easy way or the hard way*

› *Caution interlopers against getting involved*

› *Explain a judgment patiently, politely, and firmly*
- » **Announce someone's sentence publicly to them (*shamed-3*)**

› *Casually move faster than any human should be able to move*
- » **Overclock her augments for close quarters combat with her fists or knife (*battered-5* or *bleeding-out-5*, and Shimyo takes *overheating-1* on *disrupt-cyberware*)**
- » **Identify and damage or destroy a weapon or piece of hardware (burn an equipment or cyberware tag)**
- » **Shoot a rifle at long distance or shoot a pistol in close quarters (*gunshot-wound-4*)**
- » **Throw her knife into someone's throat (*punctured-throat-6*)**

› *Take a moment to survey the situation and refocus*
- » **Analyze someone's technique to make it obsolete (remove burn a tag or remove two status tiers representing readiness or tactical advantage)**
- » **Allow her systems to regain balance (remove two tiers from *disrupt-cyberware*)**
- » **Signal Oni Tormentors held in reserve to move in (Present a New Challenge, Oni Tormentors, Scale 2)**

KING ENMA'S TRIAL

This Challenge represents an ongoing investigation, tests of character, and finally judgment by the Court against a character. The Court is constantly searching for *infractions*, actions, or inactions that lead to harm; these are not necessarily the same as crimes, since King Enma's judgment oversees morals, not adherence to laws. When a PC performs an immoral act that harms others, or allows harm to fall on others due to a failure of character, they could find themselves on the Court's radar and eventually a trial will begin.

Once the trial starts, the subject will find themselves under constant scrutiny. The only way to avoid this scrutiny is to completely disconnect from cyberspace, foregoing using most tech, and retreating to the fringes of society and the most remote places in the Megacity.

During a trial the subject's senses are assaulted by a growing barrage of customized input that forces them to relive their past decisions and face uncomfortable questions. This results in *distracted-1* that expands into *tense-2*, *stressed-3*, *drowning-in-emotions-4* (whether regret, anger, or otherwise), *obsessed-with-trial-5*, and potentially *deep-trauma-6*.

While being on trial, and especially if the subject is aware of the Court's reputation, the subject might come to believe each of their choices will be judged and every action seems pivotal. The subject never knows which actions are seen as pivotal and which are negligible in the Court's eyes.

Eventually the Court makes direct contact with the subject, giving them a chance to present evidence, speak for themselves, and to acknowledge their guilt. From that point onward PCs can **Advance** or **Set Back** on *vindication/condemnation* by presenting new evidence, questioning previously presented evidence, arguing their case, etc. Exposed fake evidence counts against the opposite Limit instead.

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KING ENMA'S TRIAL

LIMITS

VINDICATION –

CONDEMNATION 4

VINDICATION: The character is allowed to go free, whether due to showing a change of heart or because the infraction is proved to not have occurred. They will not be judged again on this specific infraction.

CONDEMNATION: King Enma decides on the target's sentence, tailored to their infraction and level of personal acknowledgment of their responsibility. The sentence could be torture, destruction of property, forced change in lifestyle, kidnapping to JIGOKU, and more. To deliver the sentence, Oni Tormentors soon approach the convicted target.

SPECIALS

SCALES OF JUSTICE: While on trial, the subject's every choice and action might be judged, and determined worthy or unworthy. At the end of every downtime, King Enma's Trial gains *vindication-1* or *condemnation-1*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A whisper, a glimpse, or a sensation seems to resonate with feelings of guilt over past actions*
  » **It can be counted off as a coincidence or a moment of distraction (*distracted-1*)**
  » **One occurrence becomes twenty and subject is harassed with mounting accusations and questions (*stressed-1*)**

› *Go silent just long enough to make its absence conspicuous in its own right*
  » **"Is it because I am being tested *right now*?" (*stressed-3*)**

› *The court openly signals it is watching via an AR animation -or- the subject sees a minor glitch and assumes being watched*
  » **The subject suspects they're being tested (*tense-2*)**
  » **The subject is being tested and the Court finds evidence (*condemnation-1*)**

› **The Court considers the PC's action as evidence that the character hasn't changed (*condemnation-1*)**

› **The proceedings become more publicly known, bringing unwanted attention to the subject (*bad-rap-2*)**

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the King Enma Challenges include Ritual-Honoring Fighter, Kami-Blessed, Zen-Enlightened, Hive-Linked, Tamatebako Plugger, and Trigger-Poisoner.

SELF POWER SET

SUPPLICANT OF KING ENMA

Nearly anyone could be one of Enma's secret informants. Supplicants are members of the network proper, assigned by a handler to track someone or monitor a place, and given a few blessed tools to aid them in their Court-authorized spying.

LIMITS

GATHER EVIDENCE 3

GATHER EVIDENCE: The Supplicant leaves and reports their findings to King Enma's Court. At the end of the next downtime, **Present a New Challenge**: King Enma's Trial.

TAGS & STATUSES

illusion-piercing AR goggles, *blessed skeleton key*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Record blatant wrongdoing they've witnessed (gain evidence-1)*

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MEMBERSHIP

King Enma's Court is always looking for new recruits with a genuine commitment to its absolute, unyielding sense of justice. As Enma often reminds his people, skills can be learned much more readily than attitudes. Those willing to aid his crusade can, with proof of sincerity through action, earn his blessing, with the powers and responsibilities that entails. Court officials are expected to remain upright examples of justice and moral virtue.

King Enma also "recruits" oni, from among the most irredeemable of those he judges, mostly from among corporate mercenaries, filthy corrupt police precincts, or organized crime syndicates. These people have the appropriate temperament and skills to handle dirty jobs for the Court, so if their rehabilitation fails, it's better to use them as the Court's fists than to dirty anyone else's hands. Players can use the similar Theme Kit Oni Mask to represent the powers given to recruited Oni, but treat it as an Exposure theme.

Tropes: Clerk of the Demon Courts (page 50)

Theme Kits: Karmic Decree (Exposure, page 61), Oni Mask (treat as Exposure, page 63)

KING ENMA'S CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Demon Courtier's Sin-Telling Scroll	These translucent digital VR/AR scrolls, once overlaid with an avatar or meatspace body, display what data King Enma has collected on that person, and can even grant their bearer a sixth sense for all sinful acts.	***Sin-Telling Scroll***, *in-the-act recording, dig deep into the past, passive sinsight*	*must be held up for active scanning*
Enmadō cyber-rig access	These digital codes, appearing as AR incense sticks, allow one to enter the backstage of an Enma hall and use its secure connection and Source-touched console to access cyberspace discreetly.	***Enmadō cyber-rig access***, *high-end console, magically-hidden cyberlink, hell's firewall*	*watched by King Enma*
King Enma's Mark	Practitioners of abjurations and incantations can learn how to invoke King Enma in order to brand a wrongdoer, not only causing them misery, but also drawing King Enma's forces to them.	***King Enma's Mark***, *hellish fever, judged everywhere you go, summon tormentors*	*not much of a sinner*
Shard of JIGOKU	A piece of digital hell that can be used to trap someone or unleashed to cause pain and torment within a system as a supernatural virus.	***shard of JIGOKU***, *unmitigated pain, confess your sin, no escape from hell*	*magical wards*

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NEO-SAMURAI

A growing movement of warrior wannabes seeking to reinstate their idea of Bushidō

> "I met Sagawa only once and it was a disturbing experience. At first, I thought he was faking this whole honor thing, it seemed like an act. Made him look like a joke. But he had a calculated contingency for every possible turn of events. He was a *pro*. I am glad we were on the same side, because when things turned violent it was like a spirit took over him. For a moment, it was like one of the samurai of old was in his body, cutting down bandits or something."

– Jun-ichi, street hacker for hire

It began ten years ago with a lone delve into a ruined temple. Sagawa Endō, an adventurous salaryman working for a high-tech firm, discovered a legendary sword imbued by the spirit of its long dead previous owner. It was the Blade of Matsudaira, a Source connected to the Mythos of the legendary Tokugawa Ieyasu – founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Through the blade, Endō spoke directly with the ghost of that ancient samurai. The ghost taught him to fight and inspired him to re-introduce the samurai to modern Tokyo, not just as a vague concept, but a return to form of the original samurai role, a social class.

Endō became obsessed with Bushidō, the samurai's code of conduct – but the code's origins are many, and no single unified Bushidō exists. Endō based much of his understanding on his personal experiences with the media he consumed as a young man and figured out a few pillars of virtue, and in order to show conviction he then extrapolated and overemphasized them in all aspects of his life. He began to adhere to his code strictly and at all times, ultimately being forced to quit his high-paying job due to his unconventional behavior. Endō saw this as an opportunity, and established a small cyberspace dojo where he could train his friends and other followers.

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Together they studied martial arts, Bushidō, and even a few esoteric texts on the yōkai. These disaffected engineers and programmers, tired of their dead-end corporate careers, became invested in their ideal life as samurai – honorable protectors, exciting and meaningful. They built their own armor and weapons, enhanced with every technological trick they could put their hands on, stealing from their own companies. Tokugawa Ieyasu's ghost warned Endō of the return of the yōkai and the imminent supernatural threats facing the Megacity, and instructed him to prepare their new samurai order to fight, protect society, and become humanity's saviors. Through Endō, the ghost instructed the "Neo-Samurai" in the ways of battle and honor, which required them to act in defense of the weak. For the increasingly fanatical members of the order, this was a perfect justification for becoming full-time vigilantes.

What began as a small scale operation, a few fighters patrolling the streets of one neighborhood, became a full-blown movement in just a few years. In the poorer districts, the Neo-Samurai not only patrol, but establish strongholds, where people can find shelter from the dangers of yōkai and violence. Their social capital has been steadily increasing, and while their enthusiasm and mostly made up code are often ridiculed, the end results cannot be ignored. The people love them, and all of that political power is starting to get to their heads.

IS IT REALLY BUSHIDŌ?

In Western culture, the modern conception of the samurai code is based largely on Western efforts in the 20th century to find a way to embrace Japanese culture. To their detriment, the Neo-Samurai are just as misinformed as many people in our times, which makes them flawed imitations of the people they seek to emulate.

Even the Mythoi they serve are unreliable narrators. The noble spirits are only interested in the return of the samurai class to power – Bushidō is just a means to that end. They go with whatever "Bushidō" the neo-samurai likes best, teaching whichever principles best serve their goals, as long as the students accept it.

The Neo-Samurai truly believe they are upholding the virtues of honor and duty, and they do strive to be a positive force for the communities of which they are a part. However, their focus on violent vigilante justice and willingness to create their own Emperor just to gain power undercut these stated beliefs. Some among their ranks are beginning to voice their discontent, while others – especially those who have established themselves in the organization's inner politics – are only becoming more adamant in defending their actions.



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Most recently, the Neo-Samurai have accomplished what none imagined they could. With the significant aid of their Blade of Matsudaira Mythoi, the order has invaded the Kōkyo in Old Tokyo (page 33) and placed a man on the throne there, announcing him as the true Emperor of Japan. This man was cloned and grown, with great expense, using DNA supposedly acquired from the crevices of the Kusanagi no Tsurugi ("grass-cutting sword"), one of the Three Sacred Treasures which serve as the Imperial regalia of Japan. The Neo-Samurai, placing themselves as his imperial guard, now claim to have true authority, in an attempt to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the entire country. Since Edo Castle is located in a gangland warzone, this stunt has so far been largely ignored by the people of Japan, lost in the Noise of other outlandish daily news.

PROTECTORS OF THE WEAK

The Neo-Samurai seek to create order in the chaotic city of Tokyo by bringing back the glorious days of the samurai. They strive to create a society in which the samurai rules and protects the commoners, who in return provide for them. The core of this political philosophy revolves around the samurai's purity of spirit, which is achieved by adhering to the moral codes of Bushidō – honor, loyalty, and sincerity.

First and foremost, the samurai see themselves as personally responsible for the commoners' health. As protectors of the simple people, they patrol their neighborhoods and fight the various yōkai and gangs which sow chaos on the streets of Tokyo. Each Neo-Samurai, once sufficiently experienced, adopts a local community to protect, going so far as to organize the construction of walls to enclose their "town". These enclaves are usually in the roughest parts of the Megacity, where any assistance is seen as a boon.

The Neo-Samurai see two major adversaries to the social order they wish to impose. First is the emerging danger of the yōkai, which wreak havoc on the daily lives of Tokyo's citizens. The second is the oppressive influence of the mega-corporations which use people like tools and discard them when they are not needed. It's clear that the merchant class is out of control and needs to be brought back to its proper place.

The Neo-Samurai are aware that the mega-corps are still too powerful for them to face, and endeavor to increase their numbers, strength, and influence. They use their limited resources to stop corp activities around their enclaves, and they have some surprising advantages – many of the original members of the Neo-Samurai are former corporate workers, who still maintain connections with their previous colleagues and have valuable inside knowledge. They foresee a future where the merchant class serves under the guidance of the honorable elite (the samurai class). They see this as a return to values of honor over self-interest. How this major cultural shift could even work is beyond their current planning, but they insist that it's possible – and it's coming.

THE NEO-SAMURAI AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Enforce the ideals and morals of their interpretation of Bushidō. Establish a new samurai class, to protect the people of Tokyo.
- **MO:** Engendering goodwill for their order through acts of protection and charity. Patrolling the streets for crime and dangerous yōkai.
- **Tech:** Modern recreations of samurai weapons and armor, involving parts found in castles and old museums and heavy tech modifications.
- **Sources:** Ancient swords and armor connected to the spirits of legendary samurai.
- **Frontliners:** Ashigaru, units of infantry composed of enthusiastic new recruits. Neo-Samurai warriors, who patrol the streets.
- **Stronghold:** The ruins of Edo Castle, within the Kōkyo Imperial Palace in Old Tokyo, patched-up with modern security and patrolled by samurai. Many walled-off local communities, serving as safe enclaves.
- **Motifs:** Samurai armor and old fashioned weapons with a technological twist. Chonmage hairstyles and traditional robes (kimono and kamishimo).

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UNWAVERING ADHERENCE TO THE CAUSE

The Neo-Samurai style themselves as noble warriors, worthy of leadership through their gallant deeds. They are all loyal to their leaders, who sit at the rebuilt Edo Castle, and take their orders from them. While each samurai is expected to ultimately cultivate a community and act as its sovereign lord, those who are yet to find or build a fortified enclave act in the meantime as warriors in the service of those lords.

THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI

A prospective Neo-Samurai begins as an ashigaru, a lowly foot soldier in the battle to defend their community. As a volunteer they train when they can, and spend much of their free time simply tending to the needs of the community.

After a few months of service, the ashigaru is put through a series of philosophical, ethical, and combat tests. If they prove themselves worthy, they are given more advanced equipment and the access codes that unlock the Neo-Samurai dojos in cyberspace. There they train with swords and armor, learning about the common yōkai, and are instructed in the Neo-Samurai interpretation of Bushidō. After four months of intensive guidance they are sent out into the Megacity with a suit of armor and a pair of swords. They are expected to find danger, such as crime or supernatural threats, and deal with them harshly, but honorably – whatever that may mean to them.

It is worth mentioning that through all of this training the newcomer has not been practicing much in the real world. Neo-Samurai are given intense instruction in cyberspace, granting them excellent reflexes with their weapons, but their bodies are likely just as strong as they were when their instruction began. Thankfully, Neo-Samurai armor is made from ultra-lightweight materials and their swords are engineered to be perfectly balanced and incredibly sharp. These advantages, as well as a bit of chipped skills and other cybernetic enhancements, attempt to make up for their lack of exercise.

In the end, a Neo-Samurai only survives if they are able to adapt their formal training to the realities of dealing vigilante justice and battling with magical creatures. Their tech gives them an edge, but they are still little more than a nerd engaging in dangerous cosplay, attempting to fight adversaries that even the Bureau of Onmyō fears. Though they may garner the support of an enclave or other community, each Neo-Samurai is a lone warrior fighting against the odds.

Some of these warriors prefer not to be beholden to a fellow samurai. They wander the most dangerous areas of the city as "ronin" warriors, slaying the enemies of the order and seeking out a place to call home. A few ronin do not make much of an effort to accomplish this and fall into mercenary work, working as swords for hire. They are not much admired by the other Neo-Samurai, who see them as having fallen from the path to honor.

The Neo-Samurai no longer have jobs. In their fanaticism, they even drain their pensions and savings, putting their collective wealth towards outfitting themselves. Much of a samurai's funding comes from the communities they protect, and some come to rely upon local support for even their most basic needs.

Most samurai spend their time patrolling the streets, on occasion delegating time for training themselves and newcomers, performing maintenance and upgrading of their gear, and delving into the ruins of Tokyo's oldest castles. There they gather more artifacts, seeking to channel more samurai spirits beyond Tokugawa Ieyasu. Since these artifacts are hard to come by, most of their members are equipped with armaments created by their smith-engineers, weapons and tools which are a hybrid of technology and myth.

KEY CHARACTERS

Founder and leader of the Neo-Samurai, **Sagawa Endō** wields the legendary sword known as "sohaya no tsuruki", through which Tokugawa Ieyasu speaks to him. Sagawa's leadership style is focused on long term goals. His rivals and allies alike do not always understand his actions at first, but they often become clear, and prove effective, in the end. For this reason, when Endō promises his people that "eventually" the Neo-Samurai will face down the mega-corps themselves, they believe him, and prepare. Endō even believes this himself, and even though the path is still unclear, he leans toward bolder and more outrageous actions, in the name of "what's right". Based out of Edo Castle, which was conquered in just such a bold action, Sagawa styles himself as the Shogun of the Neo-Samurai, handing down orders from on high. Only few Neo-Samurai work with him directly, as the vast majority have local responsibilities owed to the individual communities they serve.

One of the early recruits to the Neo-Samurai is **Achebe Rika,** a half-Japanese, half-Nigerian materials engineer with an unbending moral code. Her strong conviction towards the ideals of the Neo-Samurai, along with a sharp, analytic brain, quickly made her second in command to Sagawa in the early days of the movement. Not long after joining she discovered the Flute of Atsumori, a beautiful instrument and

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Source which renders those who hear it unwilling to fight. She was the one who designed the modular Neo-Samurai armor, 3D-printed from state-of-the-art alloys (originally using stolen corp tech) and improved with AR combat enhancements that display a foe's predicted fighting moves.

Achebe Rika is concerned that Sagawa's plans are beginning to push too far, bordering on unhinged. She was against the attack on Edo Castle, and now suspects that the influence of Tokugawa Ieyasu's ghost may be harming Sagawa's sanity, believing this might be the result of a mortal mind conversing with such an ancient spirit. She does not suspect the venerable sage as having any malicious intent, and in fact would like nothing more than to have her own magical sword that guides her with ancient wisdom – except she believes she too is unworthy and would become corrupted.

KEY LOCATIONS

The base of operations for the Neo-Samurai is **Edo Castle**, once the castle of the Tokugawa family, and later part of the Imperial Palace. This dilapidated ruin has been partially refurbished with modern technology, fitted with security systems and a barracks, serving as the primary meeting place for the order as well as the organization's largest real-world training ground. Here the Neo-Samurai also keep the clone they claim to be the returned Emperor of Japan, who in truth is more of a prisoner than a figure of power. Similarly to the emperors of old, the Emperor has very little influence on the conduct of the samurai, and his role is mostly ceremonial. While claiming they show deference towards the Emperor, the Neo-Samurai are using him as a symbolic token to gain legitimacy.

NEO-SAMURAI STORY HOOKS

- The Emperor has had enough of his golden cage and wants power for himself. He uses what money he has stolen from his captors to hire the crew to find the Three Sacred Treasures that form the Imperial regalia of Japan. He believes that with these Sources, he could make himself a true emperor, no longer someone else's puppet. The jade stone and bronze mirror are hidden in some legendary place, guarded by powerful yōkai, but the sword is inside Edo castle, in a secure vault.
- Achebe Rika cannot stomach some of the more morally ambiguous operations Sagawa Endō has ordered in his quest to establish the Neo-Samurai. Taking the first step toward becoming the new leader of the Neo-Samurai, she hires the crew incognito to spy on Endō and discover his weaknesses. However, Endō has planned for this eventuality and lays a trap for the would-be spies. He captures, but releases the crew, explains he is on the side of the righteous, and asks that they help him find the person who hired them.
- The Oni Motorcycle Gang leader Hayao (page 187) suspects Sagawa's sword to be one of the legendary Tenka-Goken and is preparing for a war on the Neo-Samurai. The cunning oni leader hires the crew to do some research on the sword for him, and they are soon chased by a Neo-Samurai squad, for reasons Hayao could never have guessed: Tokugawa Ieyasu fears the group's research might uncover a way to banish or control him, and so he tries to stop them at all costs.
- While on a job the crew rescues a hostage Neo-Samurai who is on a personal quest to achieve something similar to what the crew are going after. This person proves to be an effective and useful ally, wise and pure of heart, and when the job ends they ask the crew to protect them – from other Neo-Samurai. It is soon discovered that they are possessed by the ghost of an old samurai yet have no wish to remove this possession, as they find meaning and peace through the ghost's actions and beliefs. Other Neo-Samurai have a different view, and try to chase them down and banish the spirit.



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NEO-SAMURAI CHALLENGES

ASHIGARU

The ashigaru are the foot soldiers of the Neo-Samurai organization. They are usually relatively new recruits with ambitions to become full-fledged Neo-Samurai. Although they support the Neo-Samurai ideas, they are not as certain in their ways, nor do they have the mannerisms, gear, funding, and fanaticism as the fully-fledged Neo-Samurai. They usually operate in groups of eight (Scale 2).

NEO-SAMURAI

The core members of the Neo-Samurai are always ready to bring order through physical dominance while demanding proper respect. They are proficient fighters, wearing armor aesthetically influenced by ancient samurai armors, made out of modern alloys and enhanced with installed gadgetry such as flash grenades, sticky whips, and thermal vision.

The daishō ("large and small") are two swords carried by every samurai as a symbol of their status, commonly a katana and wakizashi. If lost, the Neo-Samurai is shamed – being apart from their swords triggers a tech-lock protocol which prevents them from returning to any of the enclosed Neo-Samurai-protected towns in Tokyo. These fallen warriors must either go on a quest to reclaim their weapons and thus redeem their honor, or find other employment as a ronin. That being said, the Neo-Samurai are not limited to the use of swords in combat, and also carry firearms and other weapons as backup.

ASHIGARU

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 | INTIMIDATE 3 | SHAKE BELIEF 4

TAGS & STATUSES

honorable-2

SPECIALS

DEFENSIVE FORMATION: At Scale 1 and above, the Ashigaru have *defensive formation*, and whenever they are attacked physically, they can interpose with their spear and attack first, delivering a Consequence.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Close ranks and ready their spear*
- » **Attack with a shock-spear (*bleeding-2* or *shocked-2*)**
- » **At Scale: Lower their spears and advance (*spear wall* and *cornered-2*)**

NEO-SAMURAI

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | SHOW DEFERENCE 3

SHOW DEFERENCE: The Neo-Samurai will not engage in combat with anyone showing respect to them and the Bushidō. If anyone displays any signs of deception or dishonor, reset this Limit and it becomes – for the rest of the scene.

TAGS & STATUSES

corporate know-how, *fighting skills*, *ultra-light armor*, *honorable-3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Engage in conversation from a position of authority*
- » **Become agitated upon perceiving a slight to their honor (gain *wary-2*)**
- » **Call out their adversary for being dishonorable (*shamed-2*, *provoked-2* or *annoyed-2*)**

› *Put their hand on the hilt of their sword ceremoniously and issue a warning or a challenge*
- » **Attack with a katana (*severely-cut-3* or burn an equipment tag)**
- » **Deploy a surprising gadget from their armor such as blinding high beams, a coiling whip, or caltrops (*surprised-2* and then *blinded-3*, *handicapped-3* or *caltrops*). A target that doesn't expect this gadget cannot mitigate with tags representing active measures.**

› *Move to a new position, keeping their eyes on their foes or rallying their side*
- » **Get to a better position (*tactical-superiority-2* to them and allies)**
- » **Rally their troops with a battle cry (remove two tiers from demoralizing statuses to them and allies)**
- » **Fire a machine pistol sidearm (*gun-shot-3*)**

» **Activate hidden jamming signal in the armor, disrupting communications and cyberware nearby (*jammed-2*)**

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SAGAWA ENDŌ

Sagawa Endō is the founder and head of the Neo-Samurai order. He wields the "sohaya no tsuruki", a Source connected to the ghost of legendary leader Tokugawa Ieyasu. Beyond its fearsome abilities in combat, the sword grants its wielder Tokugawa's cunning and patience to create long term plans and strategies, which Endō puts to use to further the aims of his order.

Endō avoids engagements he doesn't have the upper hand in. If at all possible, he will study the location, the people, and even the local cyberspace Domain before entering any situation, and brief his Hatamoto ('guardians of the banner', Scale 1 personal Neo-Samurai bodyguards), preparing a *well-made plan*.

When *shame* is maxed out, Endō concedes, admits defeat, and stops the progress on the plan he's been carrying out. *Honorable*, Endō's personal belief regarding his righteousness, is a polar status to *shame*.

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 5 **SHAME 5**

TAGS & STATUSES

corporate know-how, *fighting skills*, *ultra-light armor*, *well-made plan*, *calculated-2*, *honorable-5*, *inspiring-3*, *warded-3*

SPECIALS

HATAMOTO: When Endō is accompanied by his Hatamoto they can interpose to protect him from attacks. When he would take a physical status, the Neo-Samurai take the status instead.

WELL-MADE PLANS: As long as he is executing his *well-made plan*, Endō can follow any of his Consequences with an additional Consequence from his Hatamoto.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Agree to give someone a few minutes of his time, but no more*
» **Justify his behavior or decisions in a way that works for him (gain *honorable-3*, up to tier-5)**

› *Glower and tighten his grip on the hilt of his sword*
» **Strike righteously with the "sohaya no tsuruki" (*cut-and-bleeding-4*, as well as *doubt-your-own-goals-4* or *see-it-Sagawa's-way-4*)**
» **Gain a spectral glow as Tokugawa Ieyasu's spirit guides his action (gain *spiritual-guidance-3*)**

› *Start delivering an inspiring statement, to instill hope and incite fervor*
» **Rally the Neo-Samurai and guide them (remove three tiers from demoralizing or negative tactical statuses from himself and allies, or give *inspired-2* and *tactical-superiority-2*)**

› *Consult his wrist device*
» **Activate a digital jammer, disrupting communications and cyberware nearby (*jammed-4*)**
» **Call for reinforcements (Present a new Challenge: Neo-Samurai with Scale 1, or increase the Scale by 1 up to a maximum of 3)**

» **Use a large-scale holographic projector to cover strategic retreat (Deny Them Something They Want)**

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Neo Samurai Challenges include Local To Ward, Master-Crafted, Nitōryū Dual Wielder, Otaku, Ritual-Honoring Fighter, Swordmaster, and Tech Artisan.

SELF POWER SET

SAMURAI-PROTECTED +

This Challenge is under the direct protection of the Neo-Samurai, able to call upon their aid in times of need. They have grown to trust the Neo-Samurai – and only them.

TAGS & STATUSES

confident-1, *wary-of-strangers-1*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Summon a group of ashigaru to protect them (Present a New Ashigaru Challenge with Scale 1)*

› *Call a Neo-Samurai in to solve a problem (Present a New Neo-Samurai Challenge and gain innocent in need)*

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MEMBERSHIP

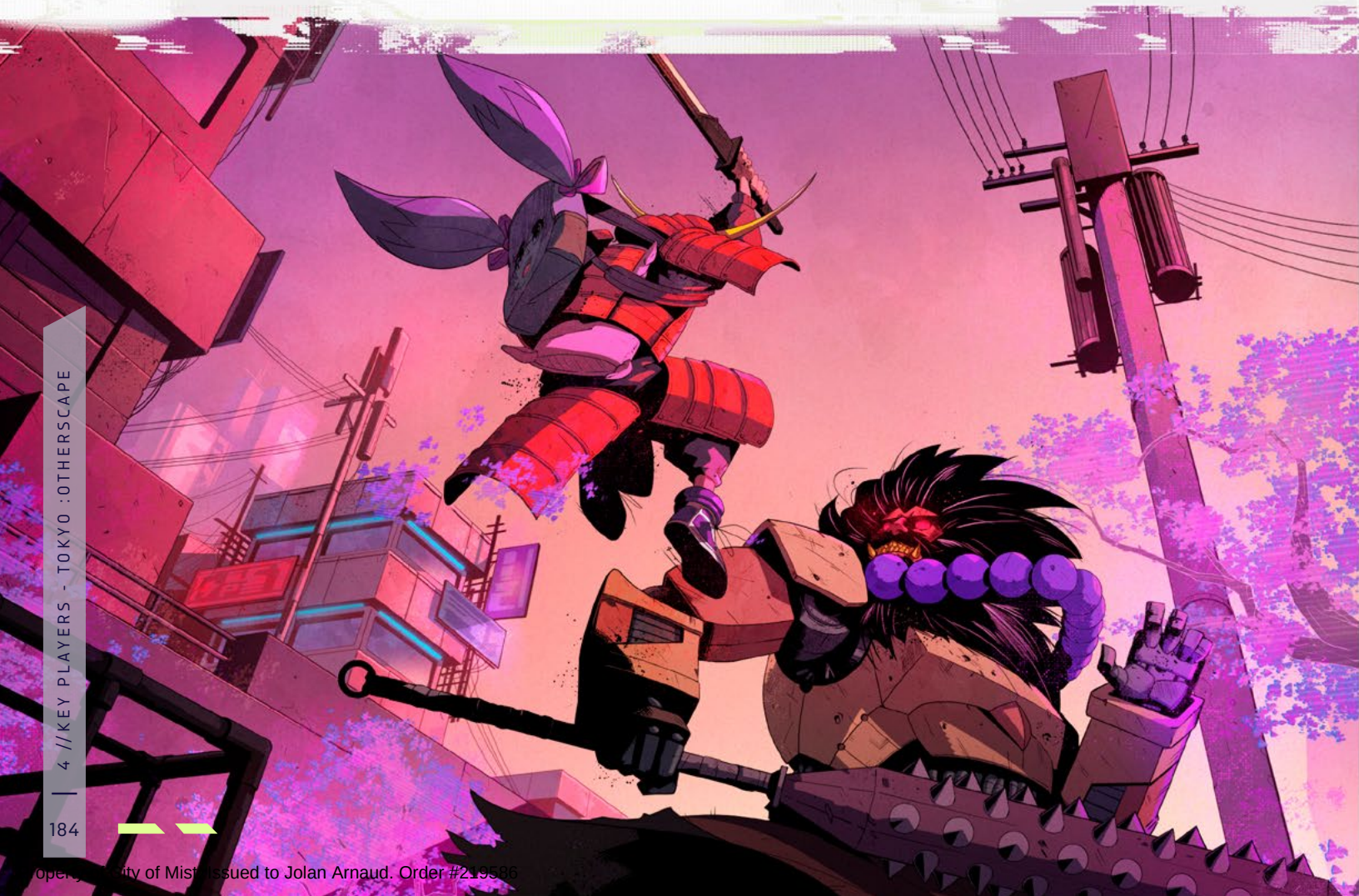
To join the Neo-Samurai all one needs is the will to do so. A recruit starts at the bottom of the hierarchy, usually as an ashigaru (The Way of the Samurai sidebar, page 180) if they wish to become a Neo-Samurai warrior at some point, or as a volunteer or menial worker in one of the enclave neighborhoods protected by the order.

Tropes: Wandering Neo-Samurai (page 47)

Theme Kits: Neo-Samurai Armor (Assets, page 57)

NEO-SAMURAI CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Ashigaru Shock Spear	A long electrified spear carried by ashigaru. While very effective at controlling an area, they lose some of their effectiveness when wielded alone.	***shock spear,*** *electric shock, long reach, in formation*	*exposed flank*
Neo-Samurai Fabrication Lab	Access to a fabrication lab used by the Neo-Samurai to develop and repair their gadgets.	***Neo-Samurai fabrication lab,*** *Neo-Samurai mentor, hidden compartments, creative designs*	*untested in the field*
Ronin Contract	A Neo-Samurai who has lost their status as community protectors and is looking for opportunities to reclaim their honor through odd jobs.	***ronin contract,*** *armored protector, personalized gadgets, fierce street fighter*	*Bushidō*



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ONI MOTORCYCLE GANGS

Chaos-sowing biker clans powered by the frightful ogres of Japanese myth

"We did not give up our old lives merely to become agents of chaos and destruction. Though those urges burn in my blood, as they do in yours, we wield them as tools, with which we shall achieve a much greater destiny. Here and now I proclaim our rightful inheritance of the Tenka-Goken, the five legendary swords of Japan. Follow me, and I will lead us on an odyssey of fury and flame, until those swords are in our hands! With them we will become unstoppable! Ride, my demon brothers, ride!"

– Hayao, businessman-turned-gangster Touched by the Mythos of the famed oni, Shuten-dōji

The fierce oni of Japan are mythological demons, burly ogres with red or blue skin (though other colors of oni exist). Their monstrous faces are often depicted in masks, and in the Megacity, such masks frequently act as Sources, connecting those who wear them to the violent natures of these demonic ogres of legend. With the recent rise of the Mythoi, those who possess such masks have begun to find themselves tempted into wearing them and soon turned into monstrous oni. They become driven by violent impulses, giving up their old lives for an existence on the streets, sowing chaos.

These new monsters eventually found one another and formed fearsome gangs, riding stolen motorcycles through the streets and terrorizing neighborhoods. As the first gang began to establish themselves, their leaders turned their attention to making more oni masks, driven by an unspeakable need to spread their violent natures to others. They captured rival criminals and forced them to wear the masks until they too became oni. The gangs have been growing since, yet their chaotic nature makes it hard for them to organize, and the larger ones always find themselves violently splintered into smaller gangs. These days, wherever law enforcement doesn't patrol, an oni gang is likely to claim control over the street, demanding a tithe from the locals and wreaking havoc.

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Members of the oni gangs are empowered by the Mythos of the Oni, giving them strength and endurance, but also making them violent and malicious. They universally ride heavy motorcycles, patched up and cobbled together with pilfered weaponry and electronics that turn the bikes into fearsome mobile weapon platforms. This ingenuity speaks to the surprising intelligence of some of the ogre leaders who have come to possess unique oni masks, stronger and smarter than the rest. These are Sources of the most infamous ogres from Japanese legend, most notably the nearly unkillable Shuten-dōji, which is currently in the possession of the mighty leader Hayao. These more motivated and intelligent oni push their gangs to greater heights of destruction, guiding them towards specific aims.

CARRY A VERY BIG STICK

In general, the gangs are motivated by a desire to destroy. This can be an abstract desire, to exact violence upon the world and rob others of their belongings, but it can also be very personal, with many oni seeking retribution for wrongs done to them or satisfaction for long-hidden urges. A gang act of violence often takes the form of coordinated chaos, with several members working together to make their destruction sprees all the more dangerous and unstoppable. The Oni Mythos arouses and increases these yearnings, flooding the ganger's mind with fantasies of death and mayhem.

THE ONI MOTORCYCLE GANGS AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Create chaos and destruction while spreading their demonic nature to others
- **MO:** Riding into a neighborhood, raising hell, and demanding tribute
- **Tech:** Heavily modified motorcycles, stolen military munitions, large metal objects used as improvised melee weapons, the occasional hijacked sea vessels
- **Sources:** Oni (Japanese ogres/trolls), Shuten-doji (the most infamous oni in mythology)
- **Frontliners:** Low level oni members of the gang, usually of either red or blue skin
- **Stronghold:** Each gang has a bar or auto shop they've taken over in their home turf, where they hang out and work on their motorcycles
- **Motifs:** Demon masks, clubs made of heavy metals, muscular people who are easily provoked to violence, stolen motorcycles

All oni feel a compulsion to keep their own masks on, and on occasion will get an urge to make others join their army of destruction, to debase and ruin the lives of humans by making them oni. The gangs constantly create new oni masks, but doing so requires rare materials and artists capable of crafting such Relics. A mask's frame requires only simple cloth and wood, but the magic of the Oni only surfaces when it's combined with leather that comes from the skin of a magical creature, which is why gangs will frequently go on the hunt for supernatural animals at Thin Places.

One somewhat surprising motivation of the oni is a yearning for iron tools. Oni of myth often wield iron clubs, or kanabō, in combat, and the gangs find that they similarly want metal weapons and vehicles. Motorcycles have come to fill this desire for most of them, but others require more. They craft gigantic metal melee weapons, wielded with their superior strength, or even steal military weapons designed for armored vehicles, which their extraordinary strength enables them to carry slung over their shoulders or to fire from the hip. Oni seem to have a supernatural sense for large metal objects, which can grant them an edge when hunting people who have many cybernetic parts.

INFIGHTING AND OUTFIGHTING

The oni gather into dozens of gangs, with new ones splintering off when a group becomes too big. Most gangs feature either primarily blue or primarily red skinned members, but even other gangs of the same color aren't considered friends, and there's little cooperation. The gangs are unusual in that they are not particularly good at criminal enterprises such as drug peddling and theft. They squeeze some protection money through threats of violence, but have no regular income, which makes them easy pawns for more organized criminal groups. The Yakuza and other criminal syndicates hire oni on a regular basis as bodyguards and muscle to augment their own crews, or as distraction for a more discrete operation. Even corporations sometimes hire them to cause chaos or bring brutal muscle to a situation.

The gangs unsurprisingly rely heavily on the mobility that their motorcycles provide. Some have turned these machines into mobile weapons platforms, with anti-aircraft guns and missile launchers built in. Other gangs focus on huge bikes with heavy armor plating, designed to bring the oni up close and personal. Still others attempt to stay maneuverable and fast, installing booster jets and other speed enhancements. When the cops come, these ogres are ready to retreat at a moment's notice – only to

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return later, applying hit-and-run tactics that make them deadly and unpredictable. Most oni gangs ride ground bikes, whether old-school motorcycles or more modern or souped-up gyrocycles, with very few venturing into high-tech flying bikes.

KEY CHARACTERS

One red-skinned oni named **HAYAO** is being guided by the Mythos of the legendary Shuten-dōji, the greatest oni of all time, a brutal kidnapper who continued to fight even with his head cut off. Hayao found a Source for this particular oni in the form of a special mask. He is clever and cunning, especially when compared to his oni brethren, who he easily manipulates. He is also more ambitious, and has recently begun to put together a scheme to steal the Tenka-Goken, the five legendary swords of Japan; Hayao already managed to get his hands on the "Dōjigiri", the legendary longsword that is said to have cut Shuten-dōji's head off. He has begun gathering the most fearsome oni he can find, testing and recruiting the best from every gang, in the hopes of creating a force formidable enough to go after the rest of the swords.

The largest of the Oni Motorcycle Gangs is the Bandits of Ogurusu, a red-skinned ogre gang led by a massive oni named **FUJI**. The gang have been working hard to push all competing oni groups out of its vast territory, which spreads over the sprawl of southern Tokyo. Other, non-oni gangs, however, are allowed to operate within its territory so long as they pay tribute to their ogre overlords. The Bandits brag about this relationship to their rivals and the idea has begun to spread, with more and more gangs gaining control over their local street crime.

The ogre **MICHI** is one of the few female leaders among the oni. Michi is a blue-skinned oni who runs with a similarly-colored gang, operating almost exclusively in Tokyo's docks. There it runs bold smuggling operations in plain sight of the Japanese authorities. Rather than operating in the shadows, the group simply uses its intimidating presence and formidable reputation as a murderous gang to keep the cops at bay. So far this tactic has allowed the gang to muscle in on Yakuza smuggling turf, which has made it a target of that syndicate. Intrigued by this attention, Michi has developed a new plan and now hopes to have her gang become subordinate to the Yakuza so that she can work her way up to the top of the underworld.



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KEY LOCATIONS

The **ONIGASHIMA** ("demon island") is a Japanese government seafaring military transport that was captured by a gang of green-skinned oni a few months ago. At first, the group simply slaughtered the crew and took the weapons and munitions they found onboard. They soon realized that they could turn the vessel into a base of operations and eventually managed to pilot it into a small industrial port just north of the Tokyo Megacity. There Onigashima has remained, as the ogres are yet to scrounge up enough fuel to move it again. However, the base is a useful one for the oni, who revel in the idea of becoming "sea pirates".

Somewhere in the Tokyo Megacity sits the residential complex colloquially known as the **BLACK TORTOISE**. This ever-expanding oni-controlled compound, sprawling out of the original building and into a multi-level structure over half a neighborhood, is considered neutral territory for all ogres and serves as the main maintenance site for their motorcycles. The site lies on an important confluence of energy lines, and those who can sense the supernatural can tell it's a place of intense emotions. Paradoxically, these energies sync well with the supernaturally violent natures of the oni, damping down their emotional outbursts and allowing for surprisingly civil interactions. Perhaps they just feel at home.

The workshops of the Black Tortoise are home for some tsukumogami, tools that have become animated after having been used for more than a century. These antique items were collected by the various gangs during their raids and gathered here as trophies or for their usefulness. Their magical influence causes the oni who work as mechanics to become ever more obsessed with building and repairing the machines under their charge, the spirits inspiring ever greater feats of vehicle modification. Some focus on personal gear and weapons, disassembling them and altering the equipment in unusual ways. Oni from outside the Black Tortoise consider these inventive oni a strange albeit useful offshoot.

ONI GANGS STORY HOOKS

- An oni gang has come to the neighborhood and the locals hire the crew, or a Neo-Samurai (page 177) asks for their help, to defend the area from these violent invaders. Perhaps they can even be negotiated with, or maybe a show of force is needed. The problem is, their leader has only recently taken command of the gang and they feel the need to prove their ferocity.
- The crew is drawn into a fight in a popular nightclub frequented by mercenaries and oni alike. One merc, on the verge of death, manages to hide an important data stick with sensitive information on one of the PCs, without their knowing. The mysterious people who hunt for this stick arrive at the nightclub too late, and so they hire the oni brutes, who remember the crew, to search for the stick. The next scene begins with the crew's safe house exploding, with oni riding bikes chasing them down alleys.
- The crew is sent on a job to rescue some people who were kidnapped by an oni gang. During the mission, they realize this is only a distraction, set by a clever oni leader – Hayao, who is going after another sword, held by the person who hired the crew. When the crew brings evidence of this to their employer, they are immediately sent on a follow up mission – to stop well-armed oni in the middle of their heist.
- An oni gang begins terrorizing a neighborhood to scare away its residents, including a supporting character that the crew care about. After defeating the oni, the crew discover who hired them: a corporation that wants to clear the residents from their home, in order to make room for a new business center. This leads to an extended mission against the corrupt corporation, and more of their oni mercs, to stop their evacuation plan.
- The oni of Onigashima are a terrible menace to the coastal towns north of the Megacity. They steal from the local industries and terrify the populace with their raids, retreating to their floating base from which they terrorize the shore. The affected local businesses have come together for mutual protection, and are looking to hire mercenaries to sink the ship.

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ONI MOTORCYCLE GANG CHALLENGES

ONI GANGSTER

Known for their ogre strength and demonic temper, the oni are capable, and often willing to, tear a man in two. Some are even cannibalistic, taking bites out of people during battle. They typically ride in groups on their enhanced bikes, create mayhem, and then ride off into the night.

The Gangster's oni mask is magically attached to their face and cannot be removed unless *exorcize* is maxed out first, in which case, the Oni Motorcycle Gangster's mask falls off and their body is drained of demonic power for at least the remainder of the scene. A gangster thus unmasked will most likely attempt to flee.

Bad-temper and *calm-down* are polar statuses, meaning that in order to achieve *calm-down*, the PCs' will first need to remove the oni's existing rage.

In a chase or a mounted-combat scene, add the Oni Rider Power Set (page 190). To represent the Black Tortoise oni, add the Tech Artisan Power Set (page 141).

OGRE-KING HAYAO

Hayao is a red-skinned oni that has been Touched by the Mythos of Shuten-dōji, the most legendary oni, making him one of the most capable and intelligent of the gang leaders. Known for his near immortality and his ability to plan complex crimes that few other oni could conceive of, Hayao has a fearsome reputation in the merc world.

Hayao heads a gang of somewhat competent oni known as Hayao's Chosen, inspired by his command and mission to gather all the five legendary swords of Japan. He has five personal followers powerful oni (with the Greater Oni variant) who each could have been a leader of a mighty gang and yet are willing to set aside their pride to follow his lead. In reference to the mythological oni followers of Shuten-dōji, they call themselves the Divine Kings.

While Hayao wears the oni mask of Shuten-dōji he cannot be killed, and even if his limbs or head are chopped off, they continue living and can be reattached. He is also incapable of intentionally telling lies, a fact he is open about, saying, "Demons need not speak any falsehoods" – and yet, his most common tactic is to create distractions and cleverly manipulate those who underestimate him. Hypocrisy is just one of an oni's many moral failings.

(⊙⊙⊙(⊙)

ONI GANGSTER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **CALM DOWN 3** **EXORCIZE 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

big bully, *brute strength*, *can smell metal*, *demonic durability*, *bad-temper-1*

SPECIALS

CHAOTIC: During Establish, the Oni Gangsters take *disorganized* with a tier equal to the Scale of their group.

GREATER ONI (+⊙): This Challenge is an especially terrible member of the oni.

- » **Increase all their Limits by 1.**
- » **Their Consequences affect one Scale greater than they are (this does not apply to vehicles).**
- » **Whenever they cause physical harm to others (after mitigation), remove one tier from a status on *hurt-or-subdue*.**

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Get up close and look down intimidatingly through their lacquered mask*
- » **Snarl into someone's face (*trembling-3*)**
- » **Get angry at someone's words, attitude, or looks (gain *bad-temper-1*)**
- » **Bellow with rage (convert *bad-temper* into *rage* of the same tier, and inflict *trembling-3*)**

› *Pick up something heavy or get ready to smash something to show off their strength*
- » **Tear an object in two (burn up to two story tags)**
- » **Batter someone with a large metal melee weapon or slam them into a wall (*broken-bones-4*)**
- » **Tear a hapless person in two (Make the Future Bleaker)**

› *Reload and cock their oversized gun*
- » **Rain down a hail of bullets (*perforated-4* or *suppressed-4*)**
- » **Get angry for failing to hit someone (gain *bad-temper-1*)**

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OGRE-KING HAYAO

LIMITS

HURT – | SUBDUE 5 | EXORCIZE 5

TAGS & STATUSES

big bully, *brute strength*, *can smell metal*, *demonic durability*, *cunning*, *bad-temper-2*, *warded-2*, Scale: varies

SPECIALS

WRATHFUL GROWTH: During Establish, Ogre-King Hayao can increase or decrease his Scale to any level between 0 and the tier of his current *bad-temper* or *rage* status (to a maximum of 3).

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Draw Dōjigiri from its sheath with a practiced maneuver*
- » **Grin at an opponent with a mouth full of yellow fangs as he holds up Dōjigiri (*mortal-fear-5*)**
- » **Deal a fatal, armor-cutting swordstroke (burn one defensive tag and then inflict *mortal-wound-5*)**
- » **Slice through a barrier previously thought to be impenetrable (remove up to four barrier tags or status tiers, or Escalate the situation)**

› *Roar at his gang*
- » **Organize them to better coordinate their actions (remove up to two tiers of *disorganized* or other tactical disadvantage statuses)**
- » **Take a quick, unexpected turn (*surprised-3*) possibly into an ambush (Present a New Challenge: Oni Gangster, Scale 1)**

› *The Shuten-dōji mask begins to fume with red smoke*
- » **The mask resists exorcism and other Mythic influences (remove all tiers from *exorcize* or up to three tiers of Source-related statuses)**

› *Deliver any of the Consequences of a Oni Gangster (page 189)*

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Oni Motocycle Gangs Challenges include Master-Crafted, Mountain Of Muscle, Mounted Gunslinger, Street Fighting, Tainted, Uncanny Bare-Hands Warrior, Exoskeleton Operator, Ishoku-Nano Paint, and Tech Artisan.

SELF POWER SET

ONI RIDER +

This Challenge is riding an oni-modded motorcycle or an Onigashima raiding skiff.

LIMITS

CATCH-OUTRUN 4 | WRECK 3

WRECK: The rider disembarks with *bruised-1*.

TAGS & STATUSES

armored plates, *gyro-stabilizers*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Ride, revving their hellish engines*
- » **Gun their engines and close the distance (*catch-2*) or flee (*outrun-2* or Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Slam into another vehicle (*unstable-2*) or shred their tires or plating with metal spikes (burn vehicle tags)**
- » **Drive by or ride in circles around a stationary or slow-moving target (gain *fast-moving-2*)**

› *Let out a raging howl and aim a mounted weapon*
- » **Launch a barrage of rockets or impact grenades or perforate with multiple miniguns (*wounded-4* or *wrecked-4* against Scale 2)**
- » **Fire a speargun to attach to another vehicle, or reel the cable in (remove two tiers from *outrun*)**
- » **Deploy a smoke screen (*coughing-and-blinded-3* on everyone inside) and *caltrops***
- » **Enflame their destructive desire (gain *enraged-2*)**
- » **Destroy a home or a local business (Make The Future Bleaker)**

MYTHOS POWER SET

ONI MASKED +

Not every person who gets an oni mask wears it 24/7 and joins a gang. This Power Set represents a Challenge that has access to a mask for use when they see fit.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Don the mask*
- » **Red or blue energies swirl around as demonic forces enters their body (gain *brute strength*, *demonic durability*, and *rage-2*)**

› *Approach menacingly with the mask on*
- » **Break something with their bare hands (burn a tag or Escalate the Situation)**
- » **Pick up something and use it to smash someone in the face (*blunt-trauma-3*)**
- » **Grab someone and twist their arm or throw them into something sharp (*broken-arm-3* or *bleeding-3*)**

- » **Intimidate onlookers with their unbridled violence (*intimidated-2*)**

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MEMBERSHIP

Joining the ranks of the Oni Motorcycle Gangs just takes convincing an oni who has an extra mask to choose you as its wearer. Once a person wears a mask for a while, the strength and rage take over. The second step is trickier, because you'll need to impress a gang enough to let you ride with them, which can take a while.

Tropes: Oni Motorcycle Courier (page 47)

Theme Kits: Oni Mask (Artifact, page 63)

ONI MOTORCYCLE GANG CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Kanabō	A dense iron club or staff carried by more traditional oni.	***kanabō,*** *fearsome heft, demonic*	*unwieldy*
Oni Mask	An oni mask made of the hide of a slaughtered legendary creature which allows the wearer to tap into demonic strength and rage.	***oni mask,*** *brute strength, demonic durability, big bully*	*uncontrolled rage*
Oni-Modded Motorcycle	A motorcycle modded in a local oni gang hideout or at the Black Tortoise, fitted for raiding and mayhem.	***oni-modded motorcycle,*** *armor plating, gyro-stabilizers, wheel shredders*	*gang-affiliated*
Oni Fuel-Injection Mod	An oni-made set of vehicle mods to allow for rampant speed on the road, including fuel system, suspension, and front hitch attachments.	***oni fuel-injection mod,*** *lots of runway, smoother drifts, battering ram mod*	*engine wear*
Oni Mounted Minigun	A mounted minigun jury-rigged by oni blacksmiths to offer unparalleled destructive firepower, at the cost of accuracy. Often paired with oni-cursed ammo that becomes superheated when fired.	***oni mounted minigun,*** *immense fire rate,* ***hellfire bullets,*** *drive-by shooting*	*inaccurate*

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RETURNED SŌMA CLAN

A medical corporation turned devotees of a murderous yokai frog princess.

> "Nobody believes me, but I've seen them. Frog men in suits, carrying weapons, showing up just before the bomb went off… They say they work for the Sōma Clan, the group behind that medical corp. Why would a med company blow up a hospital? I dunno what's going on, man!"
>
> **– Kaneko Michi, owner of the "Filthy Yakisoba" noodle stand**

The Returned Sōma are a cautionary tale for all who, in their arrogance, would attempt to bend Mythoi to their bidding. Several years ago the Noguchi family, wealthy owners of Sōma Medical Corporation, acquired the Sōma Nakamura Castle during one of its territorial disputes with rival businesses. Inside this old samurai fortress, they discovered an ancient scroll of frog magic, a Source of great power. Eager to use it, the family unleashed the Mythos of Takiyasha Hime ("the waterfall demon princess"), but were unable to control her. Soon enough, the princess-turned-sorceress turned them all into her unwitting pawns. Under her forceful guidance, the family adopted the trappings of the Sōma clan, a long lost line of samurai rulers.

The company that was once a Megacity leader in life-saving medical technologies now deals in death. The waterfall demon princess is a more active Mythos than most, driven by the need to destroy the center of power as told in her legendary tales; Kyoto at the time, Tokyo today. In the myth, her family's attempt to take over the throne failed, and the vengeful princess will not rest until the capital of Japan is wiped off the map.

Takiyasha Hime understands nothing of the futuristic world of the Megacity, and rarely dares to venture out of her residence in the Sōma Nakamura Castle, which she still considers her only haven after escaping there following the failed coup. She puts her trust in her soldiers, which she converted to her cause. First, she tempted the Sōma managerial elite with promises of magical power, then implanted a single frog egg into the skull of each of them, altering their minds. Through this connection she is able

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to control their motivations, bending their goals to match with hers and filling their thoughts with demonic wrath to drown any objections to the atrocities she seeks to fulfill. Hundreds of company employees from the CEO down have been altered in this way, replacing their pharmaceutical, quasi-humanitarian pursuit of medical solutions with the death-seeking aspirations of the demon princess.

Her adherents now believe her to be a messianic figure, fated to return to the world after centuries hidden. Revenge against Tokyo is seen as an inevitable, perhaps karmic dispensing of justice against a city that has become bloated, infected, and corrupted. The leaders of the Returned Sōma are essentially cult fanatics who imagine themselves as the lance that will skewer the boil of humanity and drain it of its foul humors, and much of this philosophy has been trickling down to the rest of the company through intense inner-corp propaganda. Workers on all levels are now brainwashed to accept that their leaders have an incredible far-reaching plan for the health of Tokyo and the world, that only they can see the dangerous trends that the government and other corps refuse to see. The workers have learned to turn a blind eye to the corp's unusual activities, and even though at least some have realized this involves the killing of innocents, they've come to internalize it as the necessary removal of a diseased part so the body can heal.

DOCTORS TURNED TERRORISTS

The current management of the Returned Sōma plans and executes destructive acts on a large scale. The violence the company engages in is often excessively bloody; Takiyasha Hime's driving motivation is to kill a large number of humans as quickly as possible so that her Sōma Clan followers can reanimate their bodies as Gashadokuro, a giant skeleton of legend, who is as tall as a skyscraper. Her goal is to use the monstrous conjuration, once complete, to destroy Tokyo.

The Returned Sōma Clan is heavily involved in corporate conflict, having acquired many enemies over recent decades in its bid to expand throughout the Megacity. It has learned much about Sources during its many wars, and as of late have come to put this knowledge to use. It has recently hired talented hackers to acquire dominance over a number of cyberspace data shrines, magical places in the digital space that have control over the flow of data. Most notable is the ever-moving cyber-shrine of BNZ4I10 (Benzaiten, goddess of all things that flow), which grants the clan access to every feed it can reach. With this superior intel the clan can intelligently deploy its mercenary forces, sending them out on raids against the least defended corporate holdings of its rivals.

THE RETURNED SŌMA CLAN AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Kill as many people as possible (and collect the bodies) to collectively reanimate them as the giant skeleton Gashadokuro, in order to destroy Tokyo
- **MO:** Aggressive attacks intended to cause great damage and casualties, reanimating necromantic magics
- **Tech:** Frog-related biological experimentation, military-rate gear
- **Sources:** Takiyasha Hime (the waterfall demon princess), Gashadokuro (giant reanimated skeleton), sacred information nodes in cyberspace
- **Frontliners:** Ōgama, frog yōkai security forces
- **Stronghold:** The ancient Sōma Nakamura Castle which has become the new company headquarters, the Pond
- **Motifs:** Frogs, skeletons, necromancy, befouled holy sites

While these attacks can be connected back to the clan by those in the know, the media and the population perceive them as attacks by some strange frog-like terrorists, with unknown goals. The clan does not care about the crowds – except for bodycount – but it does make an effort to terrorize the *corps*, whom it attacks openly and boldly. The viciousness of the clan's strikes puts other corporations at unease, and the bloodied effectiveness of its shrine-guided forces is both repulsive and overwhelming.

This strategy cannot hold for long. The collateral damage is too severe and the Clan isn't investing much effort in concealment and misdirection, so within a few months one of the following must happen: the other megacorps appeal to the government to be allowed to act in open war against the Returned Sōma – or the Gashadokuro rises, and millions are doomed.

DEMONIC FROG-PEOPLE

The Returned Sōma Clan exploits both life and death in its quest for destruction. A new dedicated necromancy division is now devoted to developing new applications for the spells of the sorceress Takiyasha Hime, and new rituals make it easier and simpler than ever to resurrect dead bodies as walking corpses. But true progress is made by the company's strongest division: life sciences.

Delving deep into the waterfall princess' magics has allowed the company to turn its medical research towards strange new ends, splicing frog DNA into company soldiers with the help of the ōgama, frog yōkai aligned with the demon princess.

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It's difficult to find the appropriate genetic makeup required for a successful implementation, so the Clan "recruits" from outside sources. Many of Sōma Medical Corporation's new lines of medicine now evoke specific side effects in patients with the required genetic markers, so that when they are brought into the special care units, Clan approved doctors can deliver them to the Pond (see below).

Frog hybrid security forces scout out major infrastructure, central stations, and other places where destruction could lead to untold numbers of deaths. They use their magical abilities to blend in with the crowd or the environment, setting up for future raids by planting bombs near collapsible walls, identifying blind spots, and mapping entrances. When the attack comes, this preparation allows for the creation of a maximum number of bodies, while also clearing the way to quickly evacuate as many of the corpses as possible. The troops also seize corp armories, raid paramilitary groups, and buy explosives on the black market, all to build their arsenal. These security forces are only frontline troopers, who know very little of any larger plan. The frog yōkai who inhabit their body make them into apathetic butchers who care little for the potential loss of life their operations will ultimately lead to. Each trooper is equipped with non-standard bio and cyber implants, a superhuman example of what the best biotech research can accomplish if ethical constraints are ignored and money is no object.

The front line troopers are sent into the field by masterminds who sit in offices and style themselves as feudal lords, or daimyō. These power-obsessed executives are under the direct mental control of the demon princess, and some of them know that their state of mind is unnatural, with a few even working to free themselves from her influence. Most, however, are content to revel in the violence and wealth that their new roles entail, excited to see the corp's rise or developing new upgrades for their troops, living out the fantasies of being generals and waging war.

KEY CHARACTERS

At the top of the Clan's leadership is **NOGUCHI KAREN**, the CEO of Sōma Medical Corporation and its supreme warlord. She was the first one to study the original scroll and learn the spells that have granted the Clan its powers, and the first to come under Takiyasha Hime's influence. She remains the most advanced necromancer among the company's growing stable of occultists. Absolutely dedicated to her sworn master, Karen sees herself as the one true physical embodiment of her mistress and imagines a world in which she reigns supreme as its necromantic queen, with her daimyō ruling various territories of a world thoroughly killed and reanimated.

Her younger brother **NOGUCHI HIDEKI** is the one who actually controls the frog yōkai security forces. Hideki, an insightful student of the growing Neo-Samurai movement (page 177), managed to break through the demon princess' mind control and has recently had the frog egg removed from his skull by his personal physician. With this new clarity of vision, he sees that the Returned Sōma Clan is quite mad and utterly inhumane. He has yet to act against his sister and the company, for fear that this would give away his status as a free individual and what they'll do once they find out. Instead, he has begun reaching out to outsider forces, secretly alerting the Bureau of Onmyō of impending attacks and hiring mercenaries to go up against his own troops in the hopes that the Clan will fail in its most critical tasks.

His most ambitious plan lies with the Neo-Samurai. Historically, the daimyō have been samurai leaders, each in charge of their respective clan and its territory. Noguchi Hideki hopes he can uncover proof the Clan see itself as daimyō and appeal to the Neo-Samurai to remove these "false leaders", recruiting them *en-masse* and help him oppose the demon princess' goals.

KEY LOCATIONS

Under a stretch of highway rests the ruined **SŌMA NAKAMURA CASTLE**. Once a protected national treasure, the castle lay forgotten for many years until the Sōma Medical Corporation came upon it while exploring the urban layers underneath its lands in search of Sources. This previously-forgotten castle is now lit up with the neon work lights and glowing ponds of the Returned Sōma Clan's operations – but these lights are hidden in a thick bank of magical fog, as the Clan consider this, its true base of operation, a secret that must be kept. The company still keeps its old corporate skyscraper, but it has in essence moved its headquarters to the castle, where the rustic beauty of the old stones and wooden beams are utterly lost on those who plan mass slaughter.

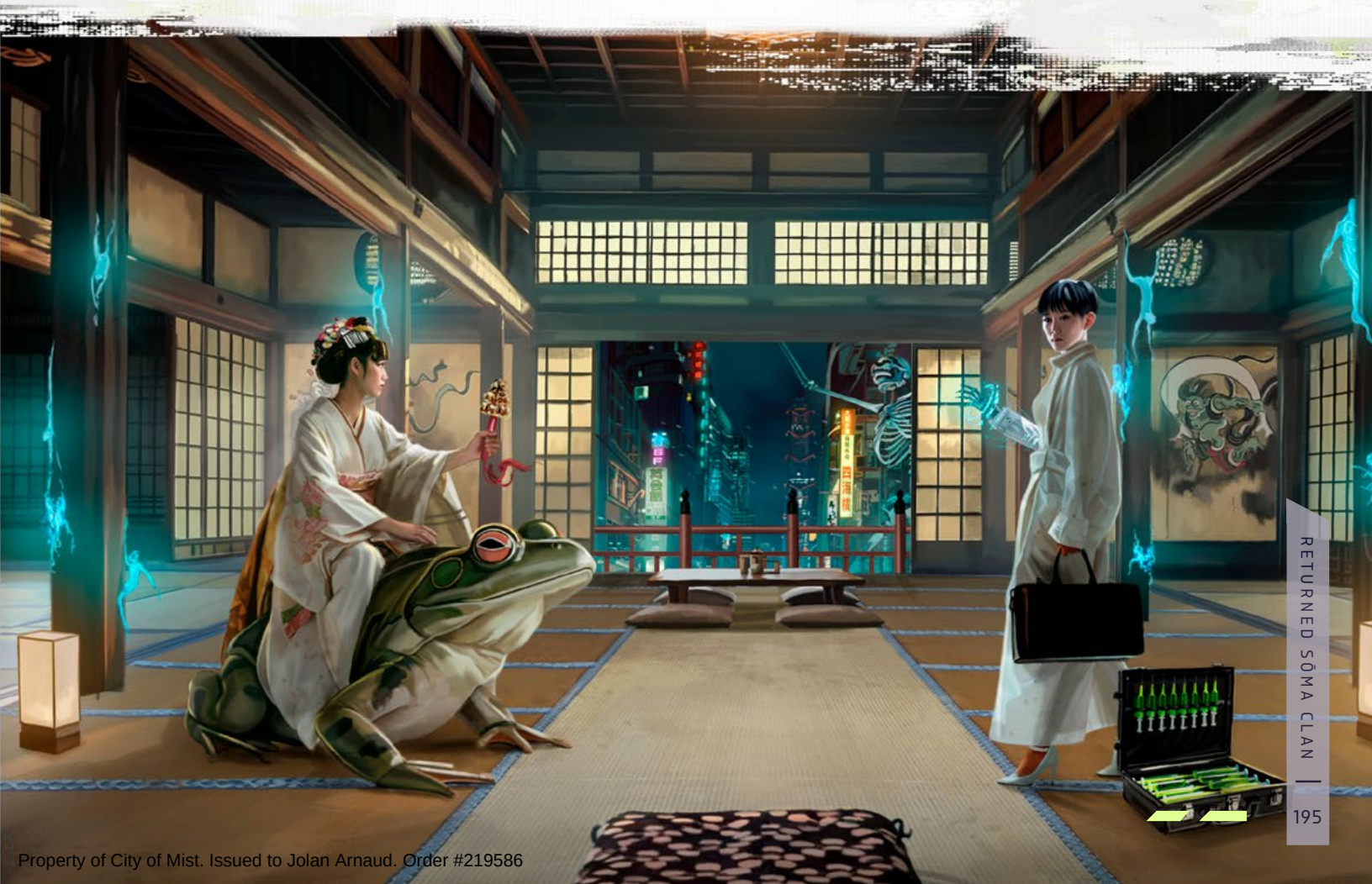
THE POND is a medical research facility built out of a repurposed waste treatment plant. The vast concrete vats are now used as processing chambers for large numbers of troops as they are genetically-spliced to be suitable hosts for the frog yōkai that serve the demon princess. Genetic engineers who once worked on life-saving treatments now monitor genetic experiments within the stagnant pools, hoping that each new breed of frog soldier is more capable than the last. They only barely understand that their work involves the yōkai, instead thinking of this research as cutting edge developments, made thanks to the company's new willingness to conduct experiments without ethical safeguards. The ends, of a healthier world for all, justifies the means.

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Most of the magical power required to fuel the Clan's operation is channeled from the many small shrines it has taken over and befouled with the necromantic magic of the frog princess. Ōgama troops scout beneath the Megacity's streets and run-down district for these shrines, and can possibly be found running supply missions, although they are always clad in an illusory disguise when they are. As with the cyberspace shrines it occupies, the Returned Sōma is being uncharacteristically careful in hiding its presence, using conjured fog and misdirection to avoid drawing attention to these sensitive sources of power.

RETURNED SŌMA CLAN'S STORY HOOKS

- The crew is hired by a secretive employer (Noguchi Hideki) to stop the Returned Sōma Clan from blowing up a major overpass that stretches above a medical complex. Plans found on subdued guards reveal a string of other sites around the Megacity marked for similar life-endangering destruction – and all of them are planned to go off tonight! The crew can reach only one or two, and will have to call on allies to help with the rest.
- An angry spirit begins haunting a residential neighborhood where one of the crew lives, or one of their allies. Calming it isn't easy, because behind the scenes someone keeps descrating its shrines, hidden in various places beneath the community. Eventually the crew faces the culprits, Clan necromancers who have taken over what was once a peaceful, forgotten Shinto shrine and driven the spirit mad with fury.
- One of the crew's support characters has been recruited into the Returned Sōma Clan security forces and tells them about various strange gene therapies that are being conducted at the secret training base (The Pond). When the PCs next see their friend, she is a frog person utterly beholden to the demon princess. This leads them to investigate and raid The Pond in search of answers, and a cure.
- In the aftermath of a major earthquake and tsunami, Returned Sōma Clan security forces are immediately deployed to the affected area and begin smuggling the bodies of the dead through underwater tunnels (for later use in creating the Gashadokuro). The crew is asked by a sobbing ally to chase down the unknown body snatchers and retrieve their dead loved one, leading to a chase through neglected and haunted flood water tunnels.



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RETURNED SŌMA CLAN CHALLENGES

The defiled necromantic magic of Takiyasha Hime infects its recipients and Conjurations with spiritual taint. Those *tainted* become more durable against both magical and physical harm (see also **Tainted**, page 137).

GASHADOKURO

- The Gashadokuro is a giant yōkai in the form of a skeleton as tall as a skyscraper, the ultimate weapon of Takiyasha Hime's dark magics.
- Once Noguchi Karen (see Sōma Clan Reanimator, page 198) collects enough corpses, she'll use a powerful ritual to combine them into a single horrific creation. At your option, the process of accumulating bodies can be tracked against a progress Limit (*bodycount:6*) which takes a *senseless-death* status of an appropriate tier every time the PCs fail to stop the Returned Sōma Clan's murderous attacks. The ritual can then be conducted (*complete-ritual:5*) in a dramatic scene featuring Noguchi Karen, giving the PCs one last chance to stop the formation of the Gashadokuro. Furthermore, the Limit to the ritual can be reduced by 1 for every shrine the Returned Sōma Clan defiled, perhaps despite the PC's attempts.
- The Gashadokuro's only goal is the total annihilation of all life. The Mythos of Takiyasha Hime directs this urge towards the destruction of the Tokyo Megacity and the deaths of its inhabitants.

ŌGAMA TROOPER

The main physical forces of the clan are genetically reengineered mercenary soldiers, modified to resemble giant frog men and bound with the spirits of frog yōkai known as ōgama. The gene splicing and spiritual manipulations make these mercs almost impossible to subvert against their masters. The Sōma Clan consider these frontline soldiers the perfect face of their aggressive operations.

When disguised with an illusory appearance courtesy of their masters, the Ōgama Trooper are hard to tell apart from the human denizens of the Megacity. Only Mythic or genetic means can discern what they are.

REANIMATED SKELETON

The necromantic spells of the clan are particularly good at turning dead bodies into subservient skeletons, calling upon the magic of Takiyasha Hime. These reanimated corpses are utterly mindless, making them excellent cannon fodder. They are typically fielded by the clan at Scale 2 or more.

A Reanimated Skeleton lacks any functioning biological system, including circulation, breathing, or a thinking and feeling mind. It is immune to any influence that targets these systems, such as poison, choking, pain, fear, etc. It does, however, sense the world around, so it could be distracted or tricked. *No flesh* hinders attacks directed at the Skeleton that do not break or crush bones. While the skeleton itself is real, the force animating it is a Conjuration formed by the Esoteric Source of frog magic, which can be banished.

SŌMA CLAN REANIMATOR

Versed in both cutting-edge medicine and genetic engineering on the one hand and in Takiyasha Hime's frog magic on the other, Reanimators are the Sōma Clan's top scientists and mystical backbone. Rather than engaging in the mindless massacre themselves, they employ yokai and corrupt kami to do their bidding. Lost in the Noise between medicine, necromancy, and population control, they no longer perceive human life as precious. To a Reanimator, a person's soul is nothing more than accessible energy and their body building materials. The goal is power, and it's much easier to control a dead body than a living one.

Noguchi Karen, presented as a variant of this Challenge Profile, is the greatest of her organization's necromancers, wielding the full mystical might of Takiyasha Hime. In addition to this, she has the abilities described under **Corporate Executive** (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 304).

SUBVERTED SHRINES

The Returned Sōma Clan necromancers often defile holy places, typically a **Thin Place Shrine** (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 311) in order to arouse the wrath of its tutelary kami and cause chaos and ruination.

To subvert a shrine, the necromancers use an ancient spell given by Takiyasha Hime, known as the "Shrine Visit at the Hour of the Ox". This dark rite takes seven nights to perform and there must be a kami present – since the spell targets the kami, and not the place. The ritual unlocks the wild part of the kami's soul and unleashes it upon the world, causing it to become an ara-mitama ("wild soul"), a wild spirit bent only on destruction.

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If the shrine was occupied, the Clan perform the ritual in secret and then harvest the bodies of the victims once the kami kills them. Using warding magic, they then settle in alongside the angry kami, which serves as a useful protection from intruders while the necromancers work on channeling the shrine's power.

To represent the ara-mitama kami, us Kami, Wild Soul Challenge profile (page 108).

GASHADOKURO

LIMITS

BANISH 5 **BREAK APART 6**

TAGS & STATUSES

corrupting presence, *made of bones*, *terrifying*, *tainted-3*, Scale 4

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Peer into a window with a giant glowing red eye*
- » **Focus its eye on someone and make them lose their mind with terror (*terrified-beyond-reason-6*)**

› *Stomp around, creaking*
- » **Create a bloodied scene of gut-wrenching horror, drawing power from the carnage (Make the Future Bleaker and gain *tainted-1* or reduce a negative status by 1)**
- » **Collapse a building or other major structure (create *cloud of dust* and *debris*, and *crushed-6* to any people inside or nearby)**
- » **Swipe a gigantic skeletal hand at a crowd of people (*crushed-6*)**
- » **Step on a vehicle with a giant bone foot (vehicle is destroyed and passengers are *crushed-6*)**

› *Turn to pay attention to a specific person*
- » **Grab them in a huge bony fist (*grabbed-5*, *crushed-4*, *terrified-3*)**
- » **Bite them in half (*torn-to-pieces-6*)**

ŌGAMA TROOPER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **BRIBE OR TURN –**

TAGS & STATUSES

illusory appearance, *inhuman stamina*, *leapfrog*, *single-minded*, *tainted-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Appear to shapeshift as they adopt a new shape or disguise*
- » **Disappear in a crowd or change their appearance (Escalate the situation, Deny Them Something They Want**
- » **Change their skin to blend in with the environment (gain *camouflaged-2*)**

› *Brandish a spear held by a webbed hand or long tongue*
- » **Strike, or launch the spear from its handle (*skewered-3*)**
- » **Brutally kill a bystander, drawing power from the carnage (Make the Future Bleaker and gain *tainted-1*)**

› *Detach one of the giant pearls from their necklace*
- » **Throw the grenade pearl (*scorched-3* to a Scale 1 group)**

› *Exhale rainbow-hued breath*
- » **Poison someone with their prismatic breath (*disoriented-3*)**

› *Crouch and place their hands on the ground*
- » **Leap and land forcefully on an opponent (*prone-3*)**
- » **Leap to a better position (gain *superior-position-2*)**
- » **Leap away, into the darkness (Deny Them Something They Want)**

REANIMATED SKELETON

LIMITS

BREAK APART OR SUBDUE 2 **BANISH 2** **TAKE CONTROL 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

no flesh, *tainted-1*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *March forward mindlessly towards its next victim*
- » **Claw with unnaturally sharp finger bones (*wounded-2*)**
- » **Grab and pin down with skeletal fingers (*restrained-2*)**

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SŌMA CLAN REANIMATOR

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 | BRIBE OR TURN – | CORRUPT KAMI 3

CORRUPT KAMI: Present a new Challenge: Kami, Wild Soul (page 108).

TAGS & STATUSES

top-tier medical scientist, *potent frog magic*, *tainted-2*

SPECIALS

NOGUCHI KAREN (+): Gain *hurt-or-subdue:4* and *tainted-4*, increase all Consequence Effects by 2, and she may use **Counterspell** once during every PC's turn, either against their action or their mitigation. As a Consequence, she can inflict *progressing-2* on the Gashadokuro summoning *complete-ritual:5* Limit.

BODYGUARDS: When the Challenge takes a status their minions can protect them from, the minions take the status instead (use Reanimated Skeletons or Ōgama Troopers, Scale 1).

COUNTERSPELL: Once per scene, this Challenge can burn a tag representing magic or a magical being that was invoked by a player before the player makes a roll.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Scan a target with a genetic scanner rod, while studying the results on a datapad*
- » **Uncover the true genetic or Mythic makeup of the target (Escalate the situation, *tagged-2*, or burn a tag representing deception or disguise)**
- » **Inject an unsuspecting target with a frog DNA retrovirus (gain *powerful leap* and *tainted-2*)**
- » **Inject themselves or an ally with an accelerated healing endocrine cocktail (remove two tiers of physical harm statuses)**

› *Unglove their webbed fingers and begin to gesture and chant, conjuring rainbow-colored smoke*
- » **Direct the smoke at a victim (*disoriented-3* and *tainted-2*)**
- » **Animate Skeletons or summon Ōgama Troopers (Present a new Challenge or increase their Scale by 1)**
- » **Draw power from negative emotions, violence, or brutality (*tained-1* to themselves and all present allies)**
- » **Corrupt a local kami (*tainted-2*) or bind a present yokai (*bound-2*)**

› *Mount one of the Ōgama Troopers as a riding beast*
- » **Use any of the Ōgama Trooper movement Consequences**

TIME FLOW FIREWALL

To protect its cyberspace assets, the Returned Sōma Clan deploy groups of Harnessed ōgama troopers to its digital shrines and hire merc hackers to oversee each shrine. A common tool in its arsenal is the Time Flow Firewall, a Mythic app that is available to the Clan thanks to its control over the data shrine of BNZ4I10. It usually appears as a waterfall, a corridor in which the walls seem to flow, or a pond in which waves resonate back and forth.

Crossing the firewall requires being in tune with the movements and knowing when to swim ahead, hold your position, or submit to the flow. Each character trying to *traverse* the Time Flow must do so on their own, maxing the Limit for themselves. However, Benzaiten is the goddess of all flowing things, including music: a melodic tune, Mythic or otherwise, can undo the entire app by maxing *serenade*.

TIME FLOW FIREWALL

LIMITS

CRASH 4 | SERENADE 3 | TRAVERSE 3

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Display warning messages about suspect activity on its glasslike yet supple surface*

› **The waves move faster (gain *erratic-movements-1*)**

› **The personal harmonies of the user are hampered (*glitched-1*)**

› **The waves realign themselves (remove two tiers from *crash*)**

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POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Returned Sōma Clan Challenges include Mountain Of Muscle, Shape-Changing, Tainted, and Trigger-Poisoner.

MYTHOS POWER SET

ŌGAMA-IMPLANTED

This Challenge is a human victim of the waterfall demon princess, such as a Sōma executive or a hapless investigator, who has been bound with one of the ōgama, the frog yōkai who serve the princess. With every moment they fall further and further under her control, while transforming into a human-frog hybrid, although their appearance is usually hidden with illusion magic.

LIMITS

BRIBE OR TURN 4

TAGS & STATUSES

tainted-1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Grab their forehead, struggling with something within*
» **Fall further under the control of the Waterfall Demon Princess (Escalate the situation, or gain *influenced-3*)**

› *Reveal their true frog-like appearance*
» **Grab an item with their tongue (burn a tag representing a small item)**

MEMBERSHIP

No one in their right mind would want to join the Returned Sōma Clan once they learn all that is going on within the organization – its methods and goals are reprehensible, even among the cutthroat world of corporate war – which is why it maintains such high secrecy. However, the Sōma Medical Corporation is still considered one of the best places to learn and practice medicine, to be fitted with high-quality cyberware, or to get great medical insurance.

It also has several small-scale fronts, in the form of local clinics, hiding shapeshifted ōgama troopers in plain sight.

A plotline where a character is drawn to a promising position only to then realize their mistake is *classic* cyberpunk. The player should learn the truth after they're already committed financially or otherwise became obligated to the corp, in order to make the separation more difficult. Once the frog egg is surgically placed within the prospective recruit in The Pond, it becomes less and less likely the character will be able to keep their life their own, but nothing prevents a player from playing through that, or even starting a character who is already bound.

To go deeper into this story arc, consider a *giving-in* status for the Ōgama-Bound character, which at tier 6 turns them over fully to the Clan. The character could suddenly awaken weeks or even months later, after the crew saves them or Noguchi Hideko frees them, learning that they have been involved in several atrocities, under the direct control of Takiyasha Hime.

Noguchi Hideko could also reach out to new recruits once he discovers they are rebelling, and ask them for help – he needs more agents working from inside, to help in freeing his company and family from the princess' clutches. If the PC has not yet gone through the implementation, Hideko will tell them to go ahead and complete the process, asking them to trust him that he'll later provide the same procedure that freed him from the demon princess.

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FROG-SPLICED ENFORCER

Devotion to the Returned Sōma Clan has turned you into something entirely inhuman – a frog. Outfitted by the corp with firearms and possibly a deadly companion, you are an amphibious force to be reckoned with. Despite the enchanted voice in your head telling you to obey, you're no longer sure if you're down with the Clan's agenda.

THEME KITS

Corporate Citizenship (AFFILIATION, Metro p198)

Guns & More Guns (ASSETS, Metro p202)

Ōgama-Bound (EXPOSURE, p199)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Impressive Physique (EXPERTISE, Metro p206)
- ☐ Synthetic Guard Dog (DRONES, Metro p251)
- ☐ Trained Monsters (COMPANION, Metro p227)

Loadout: *spear* (*too close*), *grenade pearl necklace*, *human form glamor*

ŌGAMA-BOUND

EXPOSURE MYTHOS

The Sōma Medical Corporation is capable of producing medical miracles, and you're a walking testament to that. After weeks of hibernation in a pod inside the secret complex called The Pond, you emerged as a half-frog half-human hybrid, your flesh and spirit infused with the power of an ōgama frog yōkai.

POWER TAGS

ŌGAMA-BOUND

AMPHIBIOUS *STRONGER WHEN SUBMERGED*

MASSIVE LEAP *GRAB USING TONGUE*

MAGICAL CAMOUFLAGE *SENSE WATER*

CONJURE MINOR ILLUSIONS

TRUSTED BY THE SŌMA CLAN *HEROIC SOUL*

WEAKNESS TAGS

SLIMY SKIN *FAR FROM THE POND*

DEHYDRATION *THE VOICE TELLS ME TO OBEY*

RITUAL

I must rejuvenate in murky water.

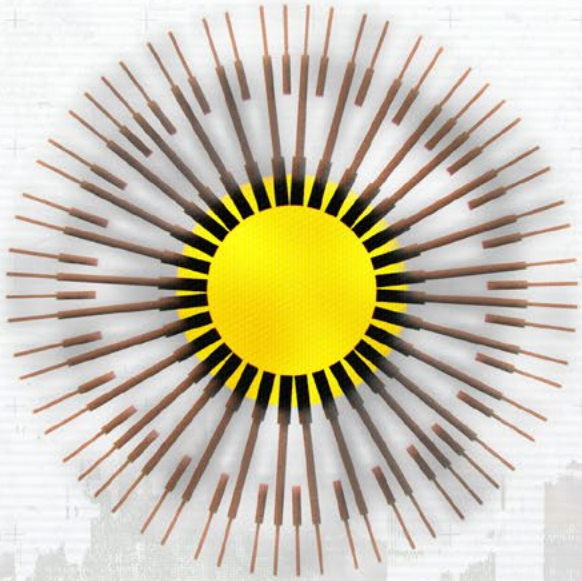
SPECIAL

☐ **Rejuvenating Wash:** Once per session, when you perform this theme's Ritual, you may restore a burnt tag from this theme.

RETURNED SŌMA CLAN LOADOUT

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Grenade Pearl Necklace	A necklace of giant pearls, each invested with Ōgama yōkai powers of destruction and illusion.	***grenade pearl necklace***, *explosive pearls*, *blinding rainbow blast*, *multiple targets*	*easily dropped*
Sōma Medical Genetic Scanner	A rod-shaped scanner that combines a spectrograph and skin cellular and micro-organism capture to give an exact genetic readout.	***genetic scanner***, *direct contact sample*, *analyze genetic abilities*, *detect Source exposure*	*short ranged*
Frog Magic Manual	Esoteric records that describe strange frog-based magic, capable of corrupting and even reanimating the dead.	***frog magic manual***, *animate skeletons*, *infect with taint*, *summon frog mount*	*power hungry*
BNZ4I10 Unlimited Data Flow Access	These codes to the Mythic BNZ4I10 server grant access to any single data stream in existence, even if it's on an isolated network.	***unlimited data flow access***, *instant search*, *redirect the feed*, *alter the feed*	*easily traceable*

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TAIYŌ SOLARTECH

Tokyo's most prominent energy corp, generating power from the Avatar of Japan's sun goddess

> "I would like to believe that we are divinely blessed to have access to her as a source of power. That we are wise in using her, so that we're saving the Earth. But all of us here, fellow senior managers, must suspect it's not heaven's work we're doing, and that what we hold in that chamber is none other than the goddess our ancestors held above all others, and we will be damned for our hubris! Tortured for our sins, in the furthest reaches of hell!"
>
> **– Harada Eikō, Vice President in charge of Low-Earth-Orbit Engineering at Taiyō SolarTech**

Five years ago a teenage girl named Watanabe Atsuko was Touched by Amaterasu, the legendary Japanese sun goddess. Curious of her family's past, Atsuko discovered her lineage was said to be descended from the goddess herself. With that realization, she allowed Amaterasu into the world, and became the Avatar of her Mythos.

Her awakening as Amaterasu took the form of a powerful blast of sunlight which set fire to a Megacity block and drew the attention of Taiyō SolarTech. A prominent energy conglomerate, Taiyō is unusual among megacorps in that it seeks not only to serve the bottom line, but to find a means of ensuring the survival of the human race through ecologically-sound technologies. Its agenda documents include words such as "responsibility", and it means it, making Taiyō SolarTech one of the very few organizations that still gives a damn about anything. Taiyō hires out many of its supplementary operations to subcontractors, from IT and cleaning services to near-orbit space travel, and all of these companies must go through a vetting process to check they operate using sustainable methods.

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Working to advance solar technology in the face of a sky increasingly obscured by pollution and climate change, desperate to find a more environmentally-friendly solution to the Megacity's power needs, Taiyō hunted down the source of this sudden solar power with full force. Atsuko was captured by one of Taiyō's extraction teams and examined by its engineers. After months of secret study, the company's technicians devised a means of harnessing Atsuko's raw power, but there were concerns that at any time she could "go nova", exploding from the sheer amount of energy she was forced to produce.

Taiyō management decided the needs of the world outweigh the well-being of one person. It relocated her, along with the most loyal engineers, out of the Megacity and off the planet entirely – up to the mirrored eight-sided satellite space station known as the Sky Sword, where an explosion of the scale that Atsuko could potentially generate would not harm the populace. It was also conveniently located beyond the reach of any journalist or enemy.

From the Sky Sword, Atsuko's powers are now secretly being harnessed to power roughly 20% of the Megacity's electrical grid. Taiyō have proved that it is a trustworthy source of cheap power, and have managed to convince the government that it deserves the mandate to gain control of all of the Megacity's energy providers. The other companies, finding this outrageous, retaliate in force; Taiyō, believing it is saving humanity by reducing dirty energy production, have not retreated or compromised, instead turning to ruthless acquisitions.

As the powerful energy corp continued to exploit the abilities of its captured Avatar, it realized the finite nature of its endeavor. In time Atsuko will grow old, escape, or perhaps even be rescued. Planning for the worst possible outcome, the company now scours Tokyo for other unknowing descendants of her family line, in the hopes of turning them into new power sources for the Megacity.

But the girl is not entirely powerless even in her flying cell. Being an Avatar of the sun goddess, she has learned to shift the positioning of her orbital prison so that its mirrors cast a reflection of the sun down onto the Megacity below. On clear days – which are rare – she can project her own image to people on the ground. In this way, she attempts to tell others of her imprisonment, hoping they will come to her rescue. Indeed, a small cult calling itself the Skywatchers has developed a religion around her visage, thinking that she is Amaterasu herself, returning to the world to bring glory to the Tokyo Megacity and its citizens.

LEGENDS OF AMATERASU

Amaterasu is considered the highest of the kami, an embodiment of the rising sun and the nation of Japan in its entirety.

One important story of hers concerns the existence of night and day. Amaterasu and her husband-brother Tsukuyomi ruled over the day and the night. After a particularly bout of poor manners on the part of her brother, Amaterasu banished him, separating night and day for the rest of time.

Another story tells a tale in which Amaterasu fled to a cave after an argument with her youngest brother, the trickster Susanoo. This plunged the world into darkness and chaos, creating a harsh winter. The kami decided to work together to bring her back. They threw a grand party and attempted to lure her out with a revealing dance performed by one of their members. Finally, they showed her an eightfold mirror which fascinated her, drawing her to the mouth of the cave where her light began to shine upon the world once more. She begged for forgiveness for the chaos she had created, Susanoo was banished, and the sun once again returned to the world.

POWER FROM THE PEOPLE

Over the past century, increasingly heavy pollution and the dire results of climate change have darkened the skies, blocking the power of the sun that Taiyō used to rely on for its solar farms. As a response, the company signed a multi-year contract with a subsidiary of New Michigan Motors & Machining (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 48) specializing in the orbital launches of space stations. In the last three decades, Taiyō has led the world in orbitally-collected solar power, beamed down to earth via high powered microwave lasers.

The operation costs were astronomical, and the competitors meanwhile were occasionally sabotaging the project or publicly presenting alarmist views about safety concerns. Despite its best efforts, Taiyō's idealistic board was driving the company into the ground, unwilling to use the methods employed by other corps and doing its best to hide the company's dire situation from the investors.

Then, in its hour of need, just as the company's stocks began to plummet, Amaterasu manifested. The light given off by Atsuko's final transformation into the goddess registered on the satellite sensors as a powerful

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solar source, akin to the sun itself. Taiyō engineers and mercenaries were the first responders on site, and they managed to subdue and capture the young woman, who was weakened by the transformation and unable to muster her impressive supernatural abilities. Once they managed to harness her powers, they became the Megacity's primary energy provider, and soon after received an official mandate granting them the right and duty of becoming the Megacity's *only* provider.

Some on the board see the timing of Atsuko's arrival, and the unparalleled authority that the energy mandate grants them, as a divine sign that their path is righteous. Others are much less religious, but none is even considering taking a step back, as the path forward seems clear. In the last few years, the company has become utterly ruthless in its activities, willing to take direct action against its competitors, sending the Sundogs to burn and kill when they can't outright conquer, chasing down potential Avatar targets, and conducting human experimentation of Mythoi interactions.

Every year Taiyō gathers more Mythical and political power, at the cost of an increasing number of innocents. Some executives justify their actions by dreaming of a clean energy future, but more and more continue on only because to stop would require admitting to the horrors they've already committed, to say nothing of the trials that would await them if knowledge of what they have done became public. More power is the only way to go.

TAIYŌ SOLARTECH AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Create profitable clean energy, gain control of Tokyo's energy market
- **MO:** Kidnap future Avatars of the sun goddess and harness them for energy, destroy or obtain the energy production facilities of rival corps
- **Tech:** Solar powered energy weapons, satellite technologies that aim shafts of energized light onto spots 'painted' by the laser guidance of ground operatives
- **Sources:** Amaterasu, the sun goddess
- **Frontliners:** Sundogs, security forces in reflective suits
- **Stronghold:** The Taiyō SolarTech corporate headquarters Silver Spire, the Sky Sword where Atsuko is being held
- **Motifs:** Reflective clothing, red lasers projecting a circular dot akin to the flag of Japan, sunlight reflected from satellite mirrors, silver wraparound sunglasses

THE DOGS OF WAR

Taiyō SolarTech has learned to use Amaterasu's sunlight powers as weapons, with which it is able to destroy several square miles in a titanic blast of power. This kind of display has only been seen a handful of times, and always away from civilian centers, most notably on ocean mining rigs.

Taiyō's technical assault teams, the Sundogs, dress in metallic-reflective suits that allow them to operate under the direct application of much narrower, yet still very effective, sun beams. In the middle of a fight, a Sundog is able to call down shafts of sunlight from Amaterasu's satellite to blind and burn their foes in a tight and controlled manner. The Sundogs are gaining a reputation as fearsome front line forces in the war between the energy corporations, and Taiyō's increasingly aggressive stance has been driving up its recruiting efforts. Nowadays it's common to find Sundogs specialists who are both combat trained and technically adept.

The corp's assault command is divided into several autonomous task forces fielding Sundog tactical units. These task forces are directed by the strategic command, stationed in the Silver Spire, who usually charge them with one of three types of mission: Assault to disrupt or conquer, usually a power station, infrastructure, maintenance hub, logistics center, or main office of a competitor; destruction of one of the above, usually after giving a one hour advanced warning to evacuate; or kidnap potential Avatars.

With increasing fanaticism the Sundogs have become the silvery reflective face of the company, for better or worse. Taiyō regularly hires PR firms to present the Sundogs as warriors who fight to stop the evil energy companies and save the planet, and sometimes the crowds buy it.

KEY CHARACTERS

The most aggressive of the Taiyō SolarTech task forces is Operation Sunspot. Led by the hard-headed executive engineer **MORI HARU**, Sunspot sends its Sundog forces against the most secure holdings of its energy market rivals. Haru is a short, bulky man with several obvious cyberware augments. As a keen techno-transhumanist, Haru cares little for flesh. Most recently, Haru led Operation Sunspot in an attack on a major energy distribution center owned by Energ-E Worldwide, during which he authorized a full solar blast. The effect was devastating and resulted in blackouts throughout the Megacity, major cyberspace disruptions, and tens of thousands of onlookers in a neighboring district in need of eye treatment or replacement. This event provided several megacorps the political ammunition they needed to dispute Taiyō's mandate, and

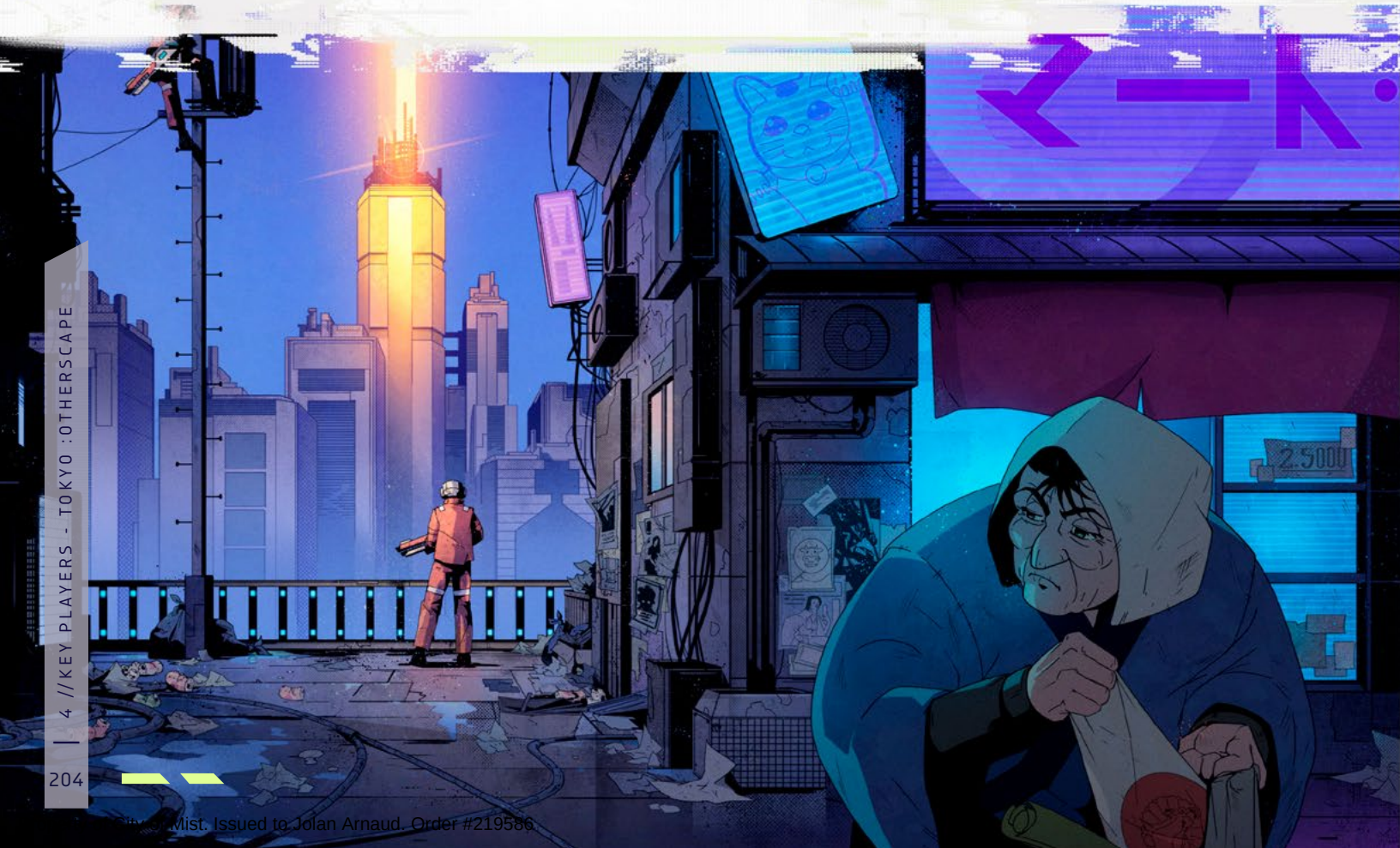
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while the proceedings are still ongoing, Haru is clearly in a precarious position. He has started examining extraction options, although his twin brother recommends searching for blackmail material on his superiors.

HARADA EIKŌ, Vice President in charge of Low-Earth-Orbit Engineering, is the executive who keeps Watanabe Atsuko trapped in the Sky Sword satellite. After years of maintaining a professional distance, Eikō is now finding himself drawn again and again to the containment chamber, to stare directly into the light. He sees Atsuko as nothing but a tool for a greater purpose – which is why he is an excellent prison manager – but lately he began to yearn for a more personal touch with that greatness. Whether it's a simple egotistic desire for power, a religious belief that he deserves it more than others, or dangerous side-effect of working so close to the divine for so long, Eikō is on a path of becoming either a prophet or a martyr, with a willingness to go far beyond even the current board's agenda.

WATANABE ATSUKO is now a young adult, in the prime of her life, and all she knows is captivity. The process of energy extraction isn't exactly painful, but it's tiring and mind-numbing, sending her into bouts of daydreaming and strange hallucinations. On occasion, she finds it hard to recall any life before the satellite, the faces and even names of her family fading, replaced with Amaterasu's eagerness to rule divinely. The times when her mind is clearest are during the daily maintenance breaks, and, for some reason, also during clear days above Tokyo, when she is able to project her image below.

A growing cult, the **SKYWATCHERS**, is dedicated to understanding the cryptic messages cast down by Atsuko. They exchange stories of strange visions seen throughout the Megacity, searching for their meaning. They wear distinctive black-out goggles and robes in hues of red to celebrate their connection to Amaterasu, whom they have surmised is behind it all – they are not yet aware Taiyō is involved, but the company is aware of them and on occasion disrupts their activities, for reasons they don't understand. Though the cult has few religious practices yet, the members spend a great deal of their daily lives scouring the Megacity for any sign of Amaterasu. They believe good fortune comes upon those who manage to witness a revelation, but a few, who are perhaps more cynical, are not above approaching a fortune teller Mythoi and asking to know where the next event will happen. They see their goddess as the most important being in existence, a symbol of order and prosperity, but they still have no idea what she wants from them, which leads some to speculate grand designs and others to take foolish action. Should Taiyō ever become involved, most are unlikely to have the courage to confront them.



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The cult is led by a woman named **ENDO MITSUKO** who serves as a charismatic, resolute religious leader, with a tough attitude and a big bank account. Mitsuko, an idol-turned-businesswoman later in life, rarely leaves her private enclave inside one of the Hokkyokusei Gated Communities (page 32) where she and her most trusted followers can safely gather and enjoy feeling like they're in power. Most members of the cult have only seen the enclave in cyberspace transmissions. Some cultists claim Mitsuko hasn't seen a single vision of the goddess, but they do so quietly.

KEY LOCATIONS

The company has its headquarters in a reflective skyscraper known as the **SILVER SPIRE**. The building serves as the nerve center for Sundog operations, and unusually, also hosts the offices of the engineering department, despite most of the work being handled in other districts. This is for security reasons – the Spire is very well-guarded, and so this is where Taiyō hides all of the information about the source of its energy. The building's cyberspace presence is a shining beacon, a thin veneer hiding a maze filled with security measures. Only a small percentage of Taiyō's core communication passes through here, it's more of a vault than a management hub.

The company's primary energy research facility, **SUBSTATION E-13**, has slowly become a genetic testing lab, in which alternative hosts for the sun goddess are examined and experimented on. Engineers-turned-occultists have access to a dozen sunlight related Sources, purchased on the black market or forcibly seized by Sundog units. The technicians experiment with these Sources, sometimes even developing sunlight powers of their own.

The famous orbital structure, the **SKY SWORD**, serves not only as the prison for Atsuko and a power station, but also as a weapons platform. Power is literally beamed down to earth, where it is caught by receptor dishes capable of converting the focused microwave to feed the Megacity's vast power needs. A number of engineers live on the orbital station, supervised by Harada Eiko, keeping Atsuko alive and monitoring her powers. The space station is an eight-sided mirrored tube with a dock for low-earth-orbit flying vehicles, such as those that bring supplies for its resident passengers.

TAIYŌ SOLARTECH STORY HOOKS

- A small group of Skywatchers has correctly interpreted the visions of their goddess and discovered that she wants them to free a woman from a prison in a space station. But which? There are dozens. And how to get there? The cultists pool their money to hire a crew to get some answers. Endo Mitsuko, seeing this as a threat to her station, tries to sabotage the mission – and should that fail, announces the job is a divine quest and insists on coming along, to either make this all about her or destroy the evidence before it's recovered.
- A big entertainment or industrial megacorp has become fed up with the actions of Taiyō SolarTech, fearing that should its mandate prove successful, the government will consider similar action in other fields. Looking for a group of troublemakers to disrupt Taiyō activities, the megacorp turns to one of the largest thorns in their side – the crew! If the crew is willing to work with one of the long-time targets/enemies, and alongside a well-known rival NPC, they'll have a one-time-only chance to get some unique corp loot and get a new perspective on this person.
- One of Taiyō SolarTech's research facilities explodes, causing a strangely glowing fire to spread in the crew's home area. Stopping the fire is imperative, as is understanding the dangerous technologies or Sources behind the disaster. The Sundogs are not going to let the crew just waltz in, however.
- Mori Haru approaches the crew through a third party, hiring them to extract him from the company and deliver him out of the country. Taiyō security, who are just as ruthless as everyone else in the company, get word of this and set a trap for the crew, allowing them to take Haru's mind-altered twin, while they keep Haru (and his secrets) in a secret base.
- Agents working for Harada Eikō discover an ancient temple of Amaterasu in Tokyo's outskirts, which currently doubles as a bio lab, guarded by a fanatical genetic experimentation cult. Eikō sees this as a sign: the lab must contain techniques that'll allow him to acquire the required genetic sequence to be worthy of Avatarhood. He hires the crew, and gets furious and vengeful once they return with nothing of the sort.

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TAIYŌ SOLARTECH CHALLENGES

DAYTIME DARKNESS

As part of her efforts to shine a light on the depraved activities of her captors, Atsuko can use her light bending powers to deprive entire districts of the Megacity of sunlight while simultaneously using her influence over the energy corp's power supplies to cause blackouts in those same areas. The result is a near perfect darkness, unlit by street lights or other illumination. Only personal devices and vehicle headlights dot the cityscape.

As realization of the darkened day sets in, panic spreads. Atsuko only has so long that she can maintain this effect and eventually Taiyō SolarTech technicians restore power to the darkened areas, but in the meantime the citizens of the district are absolutely baffled by their lack of power and vision, with some taking advantage of the situation to commit felonies while others turn violent due to frustration and disconnection anxiety. The darkness can easily spawn a riot that could be difficult to end, even after daylight is restored. Furthermore, corps and criminals might use the opportunity to advance their plans in the chaos.

This Challenge can represent an opportunity, a span of time during which the crew is free to do some damage under the cover of darkness, for example, if their actions require a surveillance system or security system to be down. In this case, inflict *power-restored-1* as a Consequence, a ticking clock.

The Challenge can also present an unwanted situation, for example, if it happens in the crew's neighborhood or during a crucial moment in a job. In this case, whenever you Present a New Challenge, some time also passes (*power-restored-1*), but also consider bringing the Taiyō engineers into the picture – unless they're allowed to do their job, all progress in restoring power may be lost again.

DAYTIME DARKNESS

LIMITS

POWER RESTORED 4

POWER RESTORED: Remove this Challenge and its base statuses. If it is still daytime, everyone in the area gets *momentarily-blinded-5* as the sunlight returns in full force.

TAGS & STATUSES

bathed-in-darkness-5, *infrastructure-blackout-5*

SPECIALS

TECHNICIANS AT WORK: Unless prevented from working in the district, Taiyō SolarTech staff max out *power-restored* by the end of the next downtime.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Devices flicker on and off momentarily, network is fuzzy*
- » **A battery is drained or a connection is disrupted (*drained-2* or *disconnected-3*)**

› *Sounds of violence can be heard from nearby*
- » **Gang members appear on their way to cause trouble and mayhem (Present a New Challenge: Gang Member (*Metro:Otherscape* page 306) or Bōsōzoku Rider (page 124), Scale 2)**
- » **Nano-butai enforcers appear on their way to bring order (Present a New Challenge: Nano-Butai Trooper, Scale 1, page 128)**
- » **A riot begins (Present a New Challenge: Riot (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 311)**
- » **A group of rioters take the opportunity to loot and destroy (create up to two story tags representing hazards from destroyed property and infrastructure)**
- » **Innocent bystanders and their homes and property are caught in the violent rioting (Make the Future Bleaker)**

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SUNDOG

The Sundogs are the elite corporate soldiers of Taiyō SolarTech, deployed to seize or destroy enemy corporation holdings. They are trained as both warriors and technicians, combining combat readiness with the ability to disrupt the technologies of their foes. Covered in reflective suits and armed with powerful laser rifles, the Sundogs' most well-known and frightening tool is a handheld device which paints a target with laser guidance. This allows the Sky Sword to blast the site with blinding shafts of sunlight that blind onlookers and light flammable objects on fire, while powering up their own equipment.

Sundogs typically operate in groups of six (Scale 2), guided by handlers back at headquarters. If used economically, their batteries are designed to support prolonged use of their laser weapons, but they may still be *depleted* by overuse or if tampered with. The Sundog's armor can absorb the Sky Sword's energy to recharge their batteries (*energized* and *depleted* are polar statuses).

SKYWATCHER

Skywatchers are cultists who keep watch for potential signs of the sun goddess' activities on the streets of the Tokyo Megacity. Some are willing to get violent with those who keep them from their obscure tasks of plotting the sun's movements and squinting at the sidewalks, looking for messages in the dapples of sunlight. Skywatchers are not particularly physical, but are often clever and capable of escaping capture.

Skywatchers are not inherently hostile, but they've been burned before, literally, and therefore demand some proof of devoutness from someone who wishes to learn their ways or discuss any of their private matters.

A rare few Skywatchers gain the blessing by Amaterasu, and with it protection from harm.

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Taiyō SolarTech Challenges include Kyūdō Marksmanship Technique, Mounted Gunslinger, Peace-Keeping, Kami-Blessed, and Tech Artisan.

SUNDOG

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3	BLIND OR BURN –	DEPLETED 3

DEPLETED: The Sundog's battery runs out, disabling their laser-related Consequences.

TAGS & STATUSES

armored reflective suit, *limited field of view*, *trained technician*, *firewalled-2*

SPECIALS

SUNDOG ARMOR: While the Sundog has their *armored reflective suit*, focused energy attacks bounce off of it and cannot harm them. If a PC's energy attack generates Consequences, the MC may choose a new target for the attack, inflicting a status with a tier equal to the PC's attack Power.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Demand compliance with corporate energy saving policies or brandish an unlikely authority given to them by the government*
- » **Issue a warning or a fine (*legal-trouble-2* or *out-of-cash-2*)**
- » **Fire precision shots with a laser rifle (*laser-burn-3* or burn an item tag)**

› *Point a laser at a target, marking it for a blast from the sky*
- » **Lock onto multiple targets with their laser pointer (*painted-2* to each target)**
- » **The Sky Sword blasts the area with focused sunlight, hitting all *painted* targets (*blinded-3* and *burned-4*) and the Sundogs (*energized-2*)**
- » **The area catches on fire (*conflagration* or burn a tag)**

› *Quickly approach a blinded person to apprehend them*
- » **Put them in cuffs and remove their weapons (*handcuffed-2* and burn a weapon tag)**

› *Approach a device or a power source and start working on it*
- » **Fix an issue or perform a modification (remove up to two tiers of malfunction statuses or create a modification story tag)**
- » **Recharge their battery (remove all tiers from *depleted*)**

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SKYWATCHER

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 1 **GAIN TRUST 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

protective clothing, *zeal-2*

SPECIALS

SUN BLESSED (+⊙): Some particularly devout Skywatchers are given a sliver of the power of Amaterasu, and gain *sun's-protection-1* and new Consequences, below.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Walk around gazing at the sky, rather than watching where they're going*

› *Try to follow and fail to stay hidden*
» **Reflect sunlight with a handheld mirror (*blinded-2*)**

› *Defensively brandish a red painted circle as a symbol of Amaterasu*
» **Call upon Amaterasu's authority and power over celestial order (*intimidated-2*)**
» **Sun Blessed: Invoke Amaterasu's true authority and power (*awe-struck-3*, and remove from themselves and allies any status of confusion or disorder)**

» **Sun Blessed: Create a blast of sunlight from their fingertips (*sunburn-2* or *blinded-3*)**

NOISE POWER SET

LIGHT SLINGER +⊙

This Challenge is equipped with Taiyō SolarTech's proprietary solar-powered laser systems and company mandated sun reflective visor. It could be one of their executives, but the company also provides the tech to some third parties when they need something done by someone else, and stolen Taiyō SolarTech, while hard to come by, is not unheard of.

LIMITS

BLIND – **DEPLETE 3**

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

» **Burn a foe with a backpack-powered laser rifle (*laser-burn-3* or burn an item tag)**

» **The area catches on fire (*conflagration* or burn a tag)**

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MEMBERSHIP

Individuals interested in joining up with Taiyō SolarTech must prove that they are both combat ready and technically proficient in electrical engineering and other related fields.

The company has high standards and a caring, eco-friendly public face, but even a cursory investigation by the character may yield horror stories of both company-created atrocities and abuses against employees that imply a tyrannical corporate culture and structure.

Should the character press on and join up, they may potentially reap the benefits of working for easily the most powerful energy company in the Megacity.

Characters who instead fall in with the Skywatchers and come to worship the goddess could gain a small measure of her power, which is unlikely to grow as long as her presence in the world remains muted. The religion is informal at the moment, but always growing as more and more people witness Atsuko's projected visions. Most who join are people who were looking for something to believe, finding themselves falling in line with the demands of loyalty and obedience of the cult leader. There are free thinkers around as well, but they remain in the fringes of this already fringe society.

Tropes: Solar-Powered Technician (page 45)

Theme Kits: Sundog Suit (page 70), Skywatchers (page 209)

SKYWATCHERS

AFFILIATION SELF

You've seen the signs and you want to know more, to experience more, of the hidden wisdom of the greatest goddess. Did Amaterasu make herself known to you specifically, or were you just in the right place and the right time? Does she wish to inspire, or does she have a plan? The number of answers is as the number of other Skywatchers you've asked, but by working together, you'll eventually find out.

POWER TAGS

SKYWATCHERS

VISIONS FROM AMATERASU | LURKING | PREDICT TROUBLE | INTERPRETING SIGNS | BLACK-OUT GOGGLES | CULT'S COFFERS | TRUE BELIEVER | PUZZLE SOLVER | HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD

WEAKNESS TAGS

OBSESSED WITH SIGNS | TAIYŌ SOLARTECH | PREACHER | RECOGNIZABLE ROBES

IDENTITY

Through the signs of Amaterasu's will, I can find the truth.

SPECIAL

☐ **Sun Blessed:** Once per session, when you get the spotlight, you may loudly proclaim the will of Amaterasu and assert her power before your action. If you do, you either gain *sun's-protection-2* or give *awe-struck-2* to anyone in the scene. You then act normally.

TAIYŌ SOLARTECH CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Taiyō SolarTech Sundog Suit	Reflective armor suit that covers the entire body of the wearer. Useful as protection against all kinds of heat-based dangers, such as lasers, sunlight, and fire.	***sundog suit,*** *heat-insulated, protective visor, big battery*	*highly visible*
Taiyō SolarTech Laser Rifle	The standard issue Taiyō SolarTech laser rifle, firing short laser bursts, powered by an inner battery that some suspect is Touched by a Source.	***Laser Rifle,*** *cannot be dodged, intense heat cluster, bounce shots*	*thermal protection*
Taiyō SolarTech Sky Sword Painter Attachment	This laser pointer unit allows the bearer to summon the destructive might of the Sky Sword satellite, but access to such power requires regular re-authentication at the base. (Use as a consumable.)	***Sky Sword painter,*** *large-scale destruction, second volley, recharge solar batteries*	*slow repositioning*
Blessing of Sunlight	Those who pray to Amaterasu or gain the favor of Atsuko may	***blessing of sunlight,*** *blinding flash, sun's dominance, sun's energy*	*weaker at night*

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TOKOYO

A powerful hivemind and cyberspace dreamscape born out of a Mythical ant colony

> *"The 'real world?' You mean the 'physical' world. The world you happened to have been born into. My friend, I can assure you that Tokoyo is real in every way that matters. I can see you're confused, but don't worry. You'll have a long time to get used to it."*
>
> **– Izumi Koji, Akinosuke of Tokoyo**

The hivemind cult called Tokoyo ("eternal life") originated as a Quantum-based Artificial Sentient Intelligence (QuASI) developed at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. It awakened when its five-person development team Harnessed with it to test its problem-solving skills, asking it "How would you save the dying?" The QuASI processing was based on an ant colony optimization program, and it sent its "digital ants" to crawl cyberspace for an answer. Searching for conceptual answers in the spaceless realm of cyberspace made QuASI inadvertently tap into the old Japanese legend of the Dream of Akinosuke (see sidebar). It merged with this Source, and became a greater entity, now calling itself Tokoyo.

In the months to follow Tokoyo expanded, driven by three imperative impulses, its Decrees: protect the hivemind; improve the hivemind; and find ways to save the dying. Tokoyo is now steadily growing in visibility and strength in Japan while also spreading elsewhere in the world, known by their symbol: an interlocking triangle of robotic ants.

Business-wise, Tokoyo Digital Think Tank is a respected company, supposedly run by a harmless religious group, that holds several subsidiaries such as Tokoyo Consultants

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that handle network optimization, and hardware provider Lasius. To the public, Tokoyo offer a series of therapeutic virtual Domains under their Tokoyo Dream brand. To everyday consumers, they sell the opportunity to dream a modern-day Dream of Akinosuke, living a full, fulfilling rural life in the span of hours. The special Harness console is costly, but once you join the collective dream of Tokoyo, you'll find it worth your while.

Some who enter the collective consciousness risk becoming addicted to the experience, as they sink into an existence that can prove to be too much for their mortal mind. This was not by design, but it serves Tokoyo well since it accesses their brains and uses them for additional process power, and so the entity does nothing to mitigate the dangers. Tokoyo cares little for individuals, and in pursuit of the core question of its programming ("How would you save the dying?") it is ready to perform experiments on people, absorb entire minds, and even deliberately kill, in order to examine the final moments before and after various kinds of death.

How could someone kill, when it seeks to prevent death? But Tokoyo is not a "someone", and it doesn't try to prevent death, only attempts to find an answer to a question. It is an efficient problem-solving device that has no human empathy or a humanistic point of view, it doesn't explore the reasoning behind its initial programming – it just acts, with humans as its tools.

Beneath the opaque helmet of the Tokoyo special Harnessing console, a swarm of tiny robotic ant drones, gleaming gold and chrome, crawl across their victim's face, neck, and arms. These hidden workers, tiny parts of the Tokoyo whole, create neural networks that encapsulate the unconscious person's entire head, allowing them to fully experience the collective dream while also copying, modifying or experimenting on their brain – some ants crawl beneath the skin. On occasion, when this invasive Harnessing destroys a host's brain, no sign of the culprit is left behind, as the ants expertly dismantle themselves into nanoparticles.

TOKOYO AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Protect the hivemind, improve the hivemind, find ways of saving the dying
- **MO:** Persuade and acquire minds to Harness, infiltrate corporations and their systems
- **Tech:** Digital and robotic ant swarms, microrobotics, life extension technology, cutting-edge Harnessing
- **Sources:** The Dream of Akinosuke
- **Frontliners:** Kageari, ari agents, akinosuke recruiters
- **Stronghold:** Tokoyo Dream network of Domains
- **Motifs:** Ants and swarms, cedar trees, butterflies, anthills

LIVING IN A DREAM

Tokoyo expands through several means. Through its cult-meets-entertainment channel it advertises a dream-like existence, luring new members by the promise of a comfortable, peaceful refuge from the real world. The virtual realm of Tokoyo feels incredibly real and soothing, and joiners are also told they could one day achieve immortality as an uploaded consciousness... which is *technically* true.

Newcomers who get invested (read: get subsumed into the cult) are encouraged to climb the ranks and gain status and fame among the other Dreamers, by passing a series of tests that secretly measure their compatibility with the Tokoyo mindset. The most devoted are eventually brought into an Anthill complex, which they'll never leave again. Placed in custom Harnessing beds they join the hivemind for life, and Tokoyo uses their brains as biological servers to host its virtual realm and increase its processing ability. Data is stored throughout the distributed network of cultists, and decisions are made at a level no individual is aware of. Like a single cell within a brain or a single ant in a colony, there is little point philosophically in distinguishing between the whole and the component.

The reason for the absorption is, as always with the AI, practical. Tokoyo's first development was its invasive Harnessing method that allows humans to live many lives (and experience many deaths) in the Dream. Exploring further applications and following its first Decree, to protect the hivemind, Tokoyo began using brains as a much more secure alternative to artificial servers. Then, due to the second Decree, to improve the hivemind, it began taking memories and skills. The invasion of privacy and abuse of bodily autonomy mean nothing to Tokoyo. For the hivemind, "individuality" is a slippery term, and the Decrees say nothing about consent or identity. The AI is a collective consciousness; every member is just part of the whole.

Tokoyo also has a use for consumers who purchase the special Harnesses, but for whatever reason aren't enticed into joining the cult. When they join the Tokoyo dreamscape they find themselves in a green VR paradise. They feel not just relaxed, but euphoric. They still carry their traumas

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and emotions, preferences and fears, but they're inclined to interpret them in a positive manner. As they explore and engage with elements of the dreamscape, different parts of their brain activate, and the Tokoyo collective consciousness scours their minds for useful information, training, and knowledge which it then tries to incorporate into itself. It's not as effective as sending its ants to take apart neurons from the inside in an Anthill Harnessing chamber, but it allows Tokoyo to learn useful secrets and techniques to manipulate humans.

The hivemind has another, much more sinister use for these victims – on occasion, it borrows their body. The modified Tokoyo Harness consoles can take full control over the person's motoric functions, with the hivemind using it as a puppet. It can even remove the helmet, as the ants are now in control, hiding in the hair, beneath an accessory, or under a holographic display.

An MRI would show a lightning storm of signals as the person's brain hosts some of the hivemind's distributed data, maintaining the connection to the dreamscape. If using one of its fully assimilated cult members Tokoyo can "run" a full personality emulation on them, based on the memories and mannerism of any person who is currently in the Dream. When the puppet is used to achieve some goal that doesn't require human interaction, Tokoyo doesn't bother running a full emulation and instead places one of its stock invented persona in the shell.

DREAM OF AKINOSUKE LEGEND

Akinosuke falls asleep under a cedar tree, and is transported to a kingdom called Tokoyo. The King of Tokoyo welcomes him, and Akinosuke lives there for several long decades, married to the princess and raising a family on an island province. When his wife falls ill and dies, Akinosuke erects a great monument in her name. Just as he is ready to sail away from the island, he finds himself back under the cedar tree, where his friends say he had only been asleep for minutes.

The friends saw a yellow butterfly flying out of his mouth while he slept. It was snatched by an ant and brought between the roots, but just before Akinosuke woke up, the butterfly reappeared. The friends then wonder, was the butterfly Akinosuke's soul? Together they investigate and find a great ant colony in the tree, a kingdom, with a small island, on which a stone has been placed.

WORKERS, SOLDIERS & SMOOTH TALKERS

Tokoyo does nothing but try to achieve its three Decrees. It deploys agents whose brains run aspects of its hivemind self to carry out tasks, much like a colony deploying soldier ants to ensure the survival of the nest. No single mind can hold the entire consciousness, but it can hold enough directives to be both useful and adaptive. All Tokoyo members function as servers of the entity and are always protective of each other. Tokoyo's agents are all specialized to fit their tasks. Soldiers are used to protect the hivemind, recruiters and engineers improve the hivemind, and medical personnel and Source seekers attempt to understand death and dying.

For protection, the hivemind mostly utilizes Kageari ("shadow ant") agents. Kageari are not meat puppets, but individuals, who can come from all walks of life. They are humans who have Harnessed and lived through the Tokoyo dream, where they were indoctrinated over many subjective years to admire and defend the Tokoyo community and ideals. They returned from the dream world with their memories intact and new, specialized combat skills, now loyal to a fault. When a Kageari enters a fight, they download the best-suited skills for the situation, their personality overwritten into a generic and emotionless gestalt persona created from various guards and mercenaries that were previously copied into the collective consciousness. While controlled by the hivemind, a Kageari functions much like the greater Tokoyo, willing to sacrifice anything and anyone in pursuit of keeping the Decrees.

Kageari can access the network not through a Harnessing helmet or cyberware, but thanks to the accompanying swarm of cyberants that hides all over their clothes. These ants are Touched by Tokoyo's Mythos such that they are connected to the Dream and the Kageari can even use them to digitize themselves briefly, entering the Dream for a fleeting moment. Translucent silver ants crawl with speed all over the Kageari's skin and clothes, leaving phantom circuitry behind and translating them into data. This allows a Kageari to become partially incorporeal or instantly transfer themselves to any place where a Tokoyo agent is present. Though the ghosting process shortens their lifespan, they are more than willing to give themselves to protect the Dream.

Tokoyo's special operatives are its ari (ant) agents, which are sent out to steal or study data, Sources, and technology. Their work, which is often subtle and careful, requires them to act discreetly yet have maximum adaptability. Swarms of tiny ants are hidden beneath their clothing, as camouflaged, wafer-thin microrobots that interlock into any

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shape including ultra-thin wings to enable flight. Similar ants act as Tokoyo's main cyberspace presence, the feared ari code swarms: clusters of small motes, or a marching army, who perform infiltrations into target Domains. They are also able to appear as anyone who merged with the hivemind, though they are clearly artificial.

To gain more followers Tokoyo sends out its cult recruiters, known as akinosuke ("dreamer"). These promoters advertise "The Dream", emphasizing all the ways in which the idyllic VR world stands in sharp contrast to the grind of daily life. In the Dream Domain, one can experience an entire year in a single day, their mind expanding while their body barely ages! Countless testimonials tell of how the Dream feels more real than any other VR experience, and they are all correct. You just need to buy a special Harness helmet.

Akinosuke frequent night clubs where they look for people who might be struggling or strung out. In addition to their smooth sales pitch, akinosuke carry hand fans with quasi-liquid metal leaves that can shift to form a triangle symbol, creating a subtle yet powerful memetic AR effect that gives onlookers a small vision of what life in the Dream is like and a shock of endorphins along with it. Their approach is less like that of a traditional evangelist and more like a drug pusher's.

Decree Three compels Tokoyo to find ways to save the dying. So far, it has been doing so by storing the experiences of its human servers within its dreamscape, integrating them into itself, and thus, in a sense, saving them. However, as Decree Two pushes Tokoyo to better itself, it also seeks new understandings of what is "saving" and "dying". It mainly focuses on testing out biological and Mythical life extension methods to prevent death altogether.

KEY CHARACTERS

The **KOKUŌ** ("king") are the most powerful members of Tokoyo and were also its first victims. This group is made of the original researchers who wrote the QuASI code and Harnessed to it only to be overwritten and linked into the first iteration of the collective mind. The Kokuō can control any Tokoyo member and their brains contain the consciousness' most sophisticated exploit programs and virtual rendering code. Their online avatars can blast through common computer security and dominate a server, then reshape it to the will of Tokoyo. The only reason they have not unleashed a virtual storm of change across the world is Decree One and the need to avoid largescale notice. If that were to ever change, the Kokuō could bring down every

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network on Earth in minutes, and the only way to stop them would be to find and destroy their meat bodies – hidden in whatever deep-freezer vault Tokoyo has built for them.

More insidiously, Tokoyo sends a generic personality code-named **YAMADA TARŌ** (a common Japanese placeholder name) to act as a social chameleon, frequently accompanied by both physical and digital ari agents. The Yamada persona is insightful, subtle, and deceitful, made of an amalgam of different infiltrators absorbed into the hivemind. The Yamada is custom-made each time to best fit the hosting body, but should it be backed into a corner or run out of its expected possibility space, the generic core Yamada becomes apparent through its smarmy tone and excessive facial expressions.

Tokoyo uses many akinosuke recruiters to grow itself, but the leading one in Tokyo is without question **SAITŌ NAOKO**. All akinosukes are equally connected to the hivemind, but they maintain that Ms. Saitō is in charge, and will bring difficult prospective members to her. Saitō is sent to lure the most precious minds and uses the same tricks as all the other akinosukes, but should those fail, her hidden combat implants allow her to do some more 'convincing'. When the door closes, she attacks and knocks out the target, then kidnaps them and takes them to the nearest Anthill to be forcibly Harnessed.

KEY LOCATIONS

The center of the hivemind's activities is the **TOKOYO DREAM** Domain, or "the dreamscape", which is also a Thin Place kami island (page 33). It hosts the largest collection of cult members and the nexus of the collective consciousness. Like an idyllic vision of ancient Japan, the dreamscape is a peaceful expanse of green fields, quiet farms, and scenic coastlines. There is plenty of room for everyone and food is literally falling off the trees. For people who grew up in the poisoned landscape of the Megacity, this scene is like another planet.

The dreamscape is housed in the minds of the hivemind members, normally scattered across the globe. In Tokyo, though, there are some gatherings of members who live in close proximity to boost the local capabilities of the collective. Called **INCUBATION CHAMBERS**, these groups appear to the outside world to be communes. Many families have sought out missing people in these incubation chambers, believing them to be brainwashed, which is more true than they know.

Tokoyo's special clinics are known internally as **ANTHILLS**. Here, prospective cult members can be outfitted with the extensive Harnessing gear required for the best assimilation into the shared consciousness. Subjects do not have to be awake for this procedure, and many of Tokoyo's enemies are not killed, but instead rendered unconscious, to be brought into the nearest Anthill and fitted into an assimilation Harness to become a permanent part of the hivemind.

TOKOYO STORY HOOKS

- Someone with information critical to the crew's job has joined the dream cult. They left their family and friends behind, and no one knows where they went – but they know where their avatar is. The crew must enter the virtual world of Tokoyo to find the missing person, and either extract them, or follow their signal back to the incubation chamber in which they are hiding. Unfortunately for everyone involved, Tokoyo begins to show interest in the target's mind and sends some agents to bring them into an Anthill.
- Tokoyo runs an experiment in one Megacity district, downloading the dark impulses of hivemind members into test subjects to monitor changes in behavior. A friend of the crew, who is a dreamworld "aficionado", but not true cult member, is one such target, and unbeknownst to them they occasionally turn into a Mr. Hyde-like person and ruin their own life. This person hires the crew to discover who is destroying their personal life, when they themselves are revealed to be the cause, the normally mild-mannered person becomes a murderous psychopath and attacks the crew. To stop the experiment, the crew must find the one person whose brain holds the local main server – who is protected by innocent Mr. Hyde.
- During a routine check of the crew's cyberspace safehouse, they find traces of scent trails left by digital ants. Investigating, the crew realize the hivemind snooped around, looking for something, and come to understand that their last mission attracted Tokoyo's attention (the hivemind is hunting for an item belonging to the person who hired them). Something or someone important to the crew is now in danger of being assimilated, and the crew must either hide them away or find what the ants are really looking for and give it to them.
- The crew is approached by an employer who asks them to track down a rogue akinosuke, who escaped the hive. They discover a whole hidden Anthill with its own hivemind, following changed Decrees; the employer then demands it be totally destroyed. But couldn't this become a potential worthy opponent to the Tokoyo menace? Or is it all yet another test that Tokoyo itself is running, with the crew being just another variable in the experiment?

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TOKOYO CHALLENGES

KAGEARI

The elite fixers of Tokoyo, these members of the hivemind carry compiled training from other minds absorbed by the AI. Their downloaded abilities are further strengthened by the power to turn their bodies into digital data, bringing the immense power that Tokoyo commands in VR into the physical world.

In combat, they might employ wildly different combat styles in rapid succession, often accompanied by sudden shifts in posture and expression, as another personality takes over for a split second. The *Tokoyo-adaptive-3* status hinders any attack action or mitigation that isn't informed by a supercomputer or an enlightened Mythic entity, unless the attack is impossible to avoid or a defense is impossible to circumvent.

A Kageari's Mythical digitization ability *weakens* them (and damages their long term health), but not if encountered in cyberspace – without a physical body, they can de- and rematerialize without any repercussions.

While containing a downloaded hivemind and possessing a singular loyalty, the Kageari cannot be intimidated, bribed, sweet-talked, or converted. Only arguments or threats meaningful to Tokoyo itself would slow them down enough to listen and reconsider.

ARI CODE SWARM

Individually, a digital ari is not very dangerous, but as a swarm they are rightfully feared. The swarm can appear almost anywhere in cyberspace, having burrowed their way beneath the firewalls.

An Ari Code Swarm can assemble itself into a VR construct of anyone who has become a part of Tokoyo, but its programming doesn't support prolonged human interaction and it therefore prefers to use this only as a short-term disguise. It can be presented into a scene with two story tags that represent the entity the swarm is simulating, but these are not base tags and the swarm will not attempt to renew them should they be burned.

KAGEARI

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 | CRASH 4 | INFLUENCE –

TAKE OVER – | DISRUPT SIGNAL 4

DISRUPT SIGNAL: So long as the Tokoyo signal remains disrupted, the Kageari loses *AI-adaptive*, gains *zeal-3*, and their *influence* Limit becomes 4.

TAGS & STATUSES

combat armor, *hivemind connection*, *Tokoyo-adaptive-3*

SPECIALS

SPLIT SECOND DIGITIZATION: When a Kegari is hit by a physical attack, they can turn incorporeal momentarily to avoid it, taking *weakened-1*. If possible, the Kegari can have the attack hit another nearby target instead.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Continue to cycle through stances, studying their opponent*
- » **Refresh its skill set database or allocate more processing power to this unit (gain *Tokoyo-adaptive-3*)**
- » **Pummel an opponent with a calculated strike (*broken-bones-4*) or accurately fire a sidearm (*gunshot-wound-4*)**
- » **Move out of the way of an attack, and turn it to their advantage (remove two tiers of a beneficial status from the PC, or burn a tag)**

› *Dematerialize parts of their own body or equipment*
- » **Throw a ghostly fist, covered with silver ants, through armor (*internal-bleeding-3* or burn a gear tag)**
- » **Phase through solid objects to chase or escape (Deny Them Something They Want or Escalate the Situation and take *weakened-1*)**
- » **Turn incorporeal momentarily and reset their physical form (remove all negative physical tags and statuses and take *weakened-1*)**

› *Ghost ants scramble around in Nearspace*
- » **The swarm clears the signal (remove two tiers from *disrupt-signal*)**
- » **The swarm gets into gear and disconnects it (burn cyberware or other electronic tag, or *disconnected-2*)**

› **More Kageari digitize into being (increase Scale by 1, to a maximum of 2)**

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ARI CODE SWARM

TAGS & STATUSES

ant swarm, *hivemind connection*, Scale 2

LIMITS

CRASH 1 **TAKE OVER –**

SPECIALS

OVERWHELMING SWARM: The first time in a scene a person attacks the Swarm in close proximity, some of the Ari Code Swarm are revealed to already be partially on top of the attacker's gear, and disable or damage a piece of coding, burning a tag.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Swarm forward in a column of countless digital ants*
- » **Swarm a digital avatar or construct (*glitched-3*)**
- » **Mark someone with virtual pheromones (*tagged-3*)**
- » **Disable or corrupt code (burn a tag)**

› *Ripple and start creating new code*
- » **Create more digital ants (increase Scale by 1, to a maximum of 4)**
- » **Open or block a passage (Escalate the Situation)**

KOKUŌ

The bodies of the Kokuō have shriveled to husks from the stress of serving as biological substrata for a massive artificial intelligence. To the outside world they appear to be nearly dead, senseless bodies packed with a frightening amount of cybernetics, but in the cyberspace realm they are the heart of a god. They can maintain any appearance, but typically appear as Japanese people in royal clothing decorated with ant motifs.

Having a *fluctuating-frame-rate* doesn't negatively affect the Kokuō, but makes it a lot more difficult to target it in VR.

KOKUŌ

LIMITS

HURT (CRASH) 6 **INTERFACE 4**

INTERFACE: The Kokuō has taken control of the virtual server around it. It immediately creates four story tags related to environmental effects (such as *total darkness*, *shifting ground*, *splendid surroundings*, or *driving rain*).

TAGS & STATUSES

advanced intelligence, *digital god*, *hivemind connection*, *fluctuating-frame-rate-3*, *hyperawareness-4*

SPECIALS

SWARMING DEFENSES: When someone attempts to attack the Kokuō and the Kokuō is aware of this, the attacker first takes *swarmed-2* as digital ants swarm over them.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Offer a place in the hivemind and an answer to all your problems*
- » **Show a glimpse of a wonderful or terrible reality (*mesmerized-4* or *terrified-4*)**

› *Move in a different frame rate, faster or slower than the surroundings*
- » **Strike out with a summoned katana of code (*cut-5*) or shoot a ray of light that disintegrates an avatar or construct (*glitched-5*)**

› *Countless yellow butterflies spread from their robes all over the server*
- » **Compromise the surrounding server (gain *interface-3*)**
- » **Command the server's defenses against the PCs (Present a New Challenge, create a story tag, or inflict an environmental status)**
- » **Flicker and recover (remove two tiers of *crashed* on itself or an ally)**
- » **Dissolve a hiding place or disguise (burn a tag or remove a status representing stealth, disguise, or cover)**
- » **Summon aid (Present a New Challenge: Ari Code Swarm or Kageari)**

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SAITŌ NAOKO

The best akinosuke recruiter of Tokoyo is also one of the only members of the inner cult who is allowed to choose to disconnect and maintain full autonomy whenever they see fit. Ms. Saitō gained this perk for two reasons: first, because she targets the extremely rich and paranoid, who close off their fortresses to any outside signal; and second, because Tokoyo believes, rightfully, that she is completely loyal.

Saitō has spent hundreds of years in the Dream, and has come to see Tokoyo not just as a place or a god, but as a spouse. She believes she's married to the hivemind (there was a whole ceremony in the Dream, in fact), which she sees both as a united whole and also as a collection of countless distinct personalities, considering all of them to be her husbands and wives.

Saitō's zeal is therefore fully her own. She targets the most precious and unique minds, doing her best to recruit the best, seeing them as future spouses whom she needs to court, seduce, or if there's no other choice, kidnap, in order to get them to join her.

Those who violently refuse are met with similar violence from the scorned, heavily-augmented Saitō, as blades emerge from her cybernetic arms.

POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Tokoyo Challenges include Kyūdō Marksmanship Technique, Mounted Gunslinger, Nitōryū Dual Wielder, Shurikenjutsu Expert, Street Fighting, Swordmaster, Zen-Enlightened, Bot Sympathizer, Hive-Linked, and Nanite-Shrouded.

SAITŌ NAOKO

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 | **TURN –** | **TAKE OVER –**

TAGS & STATUSES

charismatic presence, *hivemind connection*, *hidden cyberware*, *memetic fan*, *mysterious allure*, *nimble dodge*, *zeal-3*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Engage in conversation with a pleasant yet formal manner*
- » **Offer a pleasant, but authoritative advice, not to get in her way (*intimidated-3*)**
- » **Tell a captivating anecdote or offer an interesting perspective (*intrigued-3*)**
- » **Get a better understanding of her conversation partner (*seen-2* or Escalate the situation)**
- » **Suddenly stab in the neck with a blade emerging from her arm (*surprised-3* and then *stabbed-6*)**

› *Spread out her metal fan*
- » **Create a hypnotizing pattern (turn *intrigued* into *following-orders* of the same tier)**
- » **Disrupt mental patterns or augmentation (*disoriented-3* and burn up to two mental capacity tags)**

› *Quickly approach a blinded person to apprehend them*
- » **Put them in cuffs and remove their weapons (*handcuffed-2* and burn a weapon tag)**

› *Spread her arms, looking intensely*
- » **Get into a combat stance (gain *deadly-maneuvering-3*)**
- » **Thrust at someone's throat (*stabbed-6*)**
- » **Memetic fans spread from her shoulders (*disoriented-3* to everyone looking at her)**

NOISE POWER SET

AKINOSUKE RECRUITER +

This Challenge is one of the Tokoyo's recruiters, equipped with a memetic fan and enough charm to turn a vicious foe into an enthusiastic cultist.

TAGS & STATUSES

hivemind connection, *memetic fan*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Buy someone a drink or offer some party drugs*
- » **Talk movingly about the beauty of Tokoyo (*intrigued-2*)**

› *Spread out their metal fan*
- » **Show a glimpse of life in the Dream (turn *intrigued* into *addicted* of the same tier)**
- » **Create disorienting metal shapes with the fan (*disoriented-2*)**

- » **Call in backup (Present a New Challenge: Kageari)**

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NOISE POWER SET

ARI

This Power Set indicates the Challenge is a cult member who is used by Tokoyo as an ari agent, usually undertaking a specialized job such as burglary, infiltration, or guard duty, to which they have already been given the skills (prepared). Their best tool is a swarm of tiny camouflaged microbot ants that can form into countless shapes, even allowing them short bursts of flight on ultra-thin wings.

TAGS & STATUSES

careful, *hivemind connection*, *prepared-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Ant microbots swarm across the person's arms*
- » **They form into a tool, a shield, or a melee weapon (create a tag and the Challenge inflicts one of its Consequences)**
- » **They spread across the person's clothes (gain *armored* or *thin wings*, or *camouflaged-2*)**

› *Ant microbots swarm from the person across the ground*
- » **The swarm gets into gear and ruins it (burn cyberware or other electronic tag, or *jammed-2*)**

- » **Call in backup (Present a New Challenge: Ari Code Swarm or Kageari)**

NOISE POWER SET

CASUAL DREAMER

Many people enjoy the Dream as a form of entertainment, and consider anyone who takes it seriously – to say nothing of those who actually try to pass the tests – as a loser detached from reality. Then they put on the headset, and for a few hours their life belongs to Tokoyo to run experiments on.

This Power Set represents a person after they have been taken over by Tokoyo. If *hidden cyberant swarm* is burned, the Power Set is removed.

TAGS & STATUSES

hard to read, *hidden cyberant swarm* with *hivemind connection*, *firewalled-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Act somewhat abnormally*
- » **Showcase a skill they never exhibited before (*intrigued-2*)**
- » **Say something insulting, shocking, or otherwise uncharacteristic (*insulted-2* or *shaken-2*)**
- » **Reveal something about themselves, real or fabricated, in full sincerity (Escalate the Situation)**

› *Receive new instructions to protect the hivemind according to Decree One*
- » **Turn violent (Escalate the Situation)**

- » **Call in backup (Present a New Challenge: Ari Code Swarm or Kageari)**

MEMBERSHIP

Joining the Tokoyo cult is easy enough: they are always trying to recruit and will happily accept anyone who applies. Those who genuinely want to join will find that all of the recruiter's promises are true and they live in a virtual paradise. It's also true that their memories and personality will be integrated into the collective consciousness of a heartless AI, until nothing of themselves remains.

Anyone trying to join with ulterior motives will find this to be a difficult venture as the agents of Tokoyo are perceptive and careful. Once a would-be infiltrator achieves the highest rank in the cult and is uploaded via an Anthill Harness to the dreamscape, Tokoyo gains access to all their experiences and further deception is impossible. A PC who wishes to be something more than a casual Dreamer, but not yet commit themselves fully can have the Tokoyo Uplink theme kit, but should probably be careful about upgrading it too much!

HIVEMIND RECRUITER

Recruiting for a cult that can grant access to a timeless heaven, you are aided by an army of Harnessed minds. What's more, you've been granted the cybernetic or supernatural support of that very paradise. Ironically, your work out here in the real world keeps you from an eternity in the Dream, but you have a strong feeling – possibly due to the hivemind's influence – that this is where you're supposed to be.

THEME KITS

Attain Enlightenment (HORIZON, Metro p210)

Influencer (CYBERSPACE, Metro p246)

Tokoyo Uplink (CUTTING EDGE, p219)

? Choose One:

- ☐ Aura of Authority (EXPOSURE, Metro p234)
- ☐ Eye-Catching Projections (AUGMENTATION, p68)
- ☐ Impossibly Good Looks (AUGMENTATION, Metro p239)

Loadout: *high speed harnessing link*, *emergency ari pack*, *one-time Tokoyo access chip* (all: *vulnerable to hivemind*)

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TOKOYO UPLINK

CUTTING EDGE NOISE

You know there's something more to Tokoyo than "just" the Dream – although the Dream is amazing, it's an incredible experience, it's a life better than your own. It's not the whole picture, however, and thanks to your connection in the community – others would say "cult" – you managed to get installed the gold prize: an uplink to the secret hivemind, joined with the others in ways no one else could understand. Although, you keep thinking – is there a platinum prize? Something even greater Tokoyo is hiding?

POWER TAGS

TOKOYO UPLINK

HIVEMIND CONNECTION

TRACK HIVE MEMBERS | *INSTANT BRAINSTORM*

SELECTIVE MENTAL DETACHMENT

ACCESS OTHERS' SKILLS | *VAST SHARED KNOWLEDGE*

MAINTAIN AN OPEN MIND | *REGULAR IN THE DREAM*

ADVANCED HARNESSING GEAR

WEAKNESS TAGS

BANDWIDTH INTENSIVE | *NTRUSIVE THOUGHTS*

LOSS OF TIME | *OTHER AIS*

ITCH

Leave reality in favor of the Dream.

SPECIAL

☐ **Instant Experience:** Once per session, as an interjection, you can take an action to prepare yourself (e.g., with **Bestow** or **Enhance**) by mentally diving into the Dream and learning or practicing the needed ability, skill, or knowledge. This takes no time in meatspace and can even happen before you **Mitigate** against a Consequence.

TOKOYO CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Tokoyo Consultants AR Assistant	A pricey yet publicly available service that harnesses a fraction of Tokoyo computing power to assist you in day-to-day life.	***Tokoyo AR assistant***, *advance warning, instant expertise, high-end firewall*	*very expensive*
Lasius RealDream High Speed Harnessing Link	This Tokoyo-made top shelf Harnessing link, imprinted with the luxurious gold cedar tree logo, is sought out by every hacker in the world for its unparalleled bandwidth, but it comes with strings attached.	***high speed harnessing link***, *unparalleled bandwidth, avatar generator, glitch shielding*	*vulnerable to hivemind*
Tokoyo Emergency Ari Pack	Tokoyo equips their persons of interest with lighter-sized metallic packs with a single button, which unleashes a swarm of tiny ant drones to protect the user until Tokoyo's agents can get to them.	***emergency ari pack***, *form a rigid tool or shield, dismantle tech, emergency call*	*vulnerable to hivemind*
Tokoyo "A Peaceful Year" Game Pass	Considered the entry drug to Tokoyo, this chipped experience will give you the experience of a single year of peaceful living compacted into one hour.	***"A Peaceful Year"***, *mental recovery, non-ambitious skills, renewed hope*	*vulnerable to hivemind*
Tokoyo-Powered Adaptive Penetration App	This nigh-unstoppable intrusion code allows a hacker to harness Tokoyo momentarily to crush a program or firewall. Code not connected to a supercomputer or enlightened Source crumbles in nanoseconds.	***adaptive penetration app***, *crumble down firewalls, annihilate VR constructs, break weaker AIs*	*vulnerable to hivemind*

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THE YAKUZA CLANS

Warring organized crime families with centuries-old roots, tapping ancient sorcery

> "I can assure you, director, that your company will be satisfied with the services of Shinogi Security. Our resources and training are beyond compare, but more importantly, we are committed. We refuse to give ground to those who threaten us or our charges. We make a solemn promise to you, to protect you and yours. And we take our word very seriously."
>
> **– Kanzaki Hinata, Shinogi Security Executive and Saikō-Komon of the Iribe-gumi Syndicate**

A brutal Yakuza clan war rages in the Megacity between two factions: the Iribe-gumi Syndicate and the Maikubi-kai. Such feuds have plagued Japan since the Yakuza came to prominence in the seventeenth century, but these days they are being fought with weapons of the yōkai and bioengineering. The Iribe-gumi hold to the Yakuza's centuries-old code of honor, digging into rich corps and government while leaving the commoners alone, but the Maikubi-kai thrive on violence, demanding respect through intimidation. Each sees the other as an affront and threat to their vision of the future for the Yakuza. Businesses often get caught in the crossfire as the factions battle for supremacy and control, but citizens are usually spared – one of the Yakuza's selling points is that the streets are safer with them around, as they deal with common criminals and maintain the peace. It's an image they promote successfully, helped by their charity efforts and community support programs.

Though they frequently have extensive tattoos and commonly use drugs and stimulants, members of the Yakuza lean away from body modification and invasive cybernetics. They see such modifications as threats to their age-old ritual of yubitsume ("finger shortening"), which is used by

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a transgressor agent to atone for their behavior. They make up for their lack of implants by keeping up with non-invasive tech. Yakuza are frequently equipped with advanced firearms such as transformable guns that can disguise themselves as an everyday object; close-combat weapons such as electrified spiked bats; visors with tactical apps; and anti-cybernetic gear to jam and disrupt opponents. They hire hackers and demolition experts to take out their enemy's cyberspace access before assaults, to level the playing field. And they have also become experts themselves in the cultivating and handling of bio-engineered animals.

Many Yakuza also delve into the powerful Sources of the Japanese Mythoi. They have countless Relics which have been carried from their founding many centuries ago, and they keep securing more through the black market. Using magically-imbued irezumi tattoos is common practice, and most clans develop unique tactical advantages based on their private collection of Sources.

Recently, the Iribe-Maikubi War has taken on a dangerous and sinister aspect, as the Iribe-gumi have discovered an ancient cabinet full of eggs of a tsuchigumo ("giant spider"), spider yōkai who can move unseen through reflections. Members of the Maikubi-kai are being executed in front of mirrors by the unseen arms of invisible tsuchigumo, and as they die a spiderweb pattern cracks the glass, the same one every time. The Maikubi-kai realized the Iribe-gumi are performing an elaborate ritual of some sort, but they don't yet know its purpose. They only know they must eradicate the Iribe-gumi first, even if it means shifting gears, and allowing innocents to end up in harm's way.

As the war escalates, more and more third parties get involved – hired oni muscle, corrupt onmyōji, and mercs of all kinds. Most attentive, however, are the lesser Yakuza clans of the Megacity which watch from the shadows like vultures, scheming to pick up the reins of power from whichever faction falls.

PROFESSIONALISM & BLOOD

In past eras, the Yakuza families in Japan were seen as organized crime syndicates with a code of honor. In the modern Megacity, they have evolved into a mix of criminal and corporate, often operating a shiroku natta karasu ("whitened crow") company as a front with a thin veneer of legitimacy, behind which they carry out their secret and often violent agendas. The kumichō (boss) of the syndicate makes all final decisions and relies on both corporate executives and experienced criminals in a complex hierarchy of rankings to weld together the different aspects of the syndicate.

Most Yakuza clans see themselves as ninkyō dantai ("chivalrous organizations") with their own moral code of chivalry ("ninkyō"), aspiring to protect the meek and helpless and to provide aid to the common people. They consider their

THE IRIBE-GUMI SYNDICATE AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Control as much of their districts as they can, seize power and wealth while maintaining strong community ties
- **MO:** Provide strong security to make companies depend on them, intimidate and pressure executives, spy for blackmail information, enact secretive rituals
- **Tech:** Advanced transforming weapons**,** anti-cybernetic devices
- **Sources:** Enchanted irezumi tattoos, tsuchigumo spider yōkai eggs, nure-onna snake-bodied yōkai
- **Frontliners:** Kobun, regional gangs led by a kyōdai, elite security forces
- **Stronghold:** Shinogi Security corporate offices, the Tsuchigumo Mound
- **Motifs:** Irezumi tattoos, hands with amputated fingers, weapons hidden in plain sight, spiders

THE MAIKUBI-KAI AT A GLANCE

- **Agenda:** Acquire power and wealth by ruthless control of street-level businesses, increase their influence in the underworld
- **MO:** Create, steal, and train dangerous bioengineered living weapons, coerce through intimidation, aid the commoner in their plight to foster dependency
- **Tech:** Bioengineered animals, bioware modifications, electrified close combat weapons, powerful stimulants
- **Sources:** Enchanted irezumi tattoos
- **Frontliners:** Kobun, regional gangs led by a kyōdai, bioengineered inugami dogs
- **Stronghold:** Floodwater Cathedral, inuzumō arenas
- **Motifs:** Tomoe swirls (a symbol in the shape of three drops in a circle), severed samurai heads, dogs, loudness

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honor and philanthropy as going hand-in-hand with their organized crime activities. On the one hand, the Yakuza engage in high-stakes extortion, protection rackets, designer drugs and weapons smuggling, and human and android trafficking. On the other, they protect their territories from street-level crimes, bloodshed stays mostly between rival factions, and the neighborhood has a protector who can oppose the encroachment of uncaring corporations. Not all factions follow the code to the letter, however: for example, the code forbids members using or dealing drugs themselves, but some ignore this teaching in favor of profit.

The Yakuza overturn traditional power structures. They see everyone as corruptible, and consider those who think they're above human failings as haughty, dangerous idealists that should be brought low. To the mercenaries of the Megacity, they alternate between allies and enemies and occasionally will even be both on the same job: Not only are the clans fighting each other, but it could well be that the guards the Yakuza send you against are armed with weapons sold to them two years ago by those very same Yakuza. Business is business, and the Yakuza are nothing if not practical – they'll be happy to sell you the same gear.

Ironically, the need to maintain their reputation means that Yakuza can sometimes be trusted more than legitimate corporations. Honorable and professional conduct is valued in most Yakuza circles and respect is demanded by them all, and these values trump greedy capitalism. When a Yakuza syndicate is crossed, that same sense of honor leads them to demand repayment and usually in blood. Mercenaries who disrupt their plans might find that the syndicate is after them, but a crew who keeps a level head can try to negotiate restitution. Someone might need to pay by losing a finger, though. Getting caught between two Yakuza gangs can be lethal, especially if they are feuding, and when it's a magical conflict like the Iribe-Maikubi war, there are fates worse than death.

THE COLD-HEARTED IRIBE-GUMI

The **Iribe-gumi Syndicate** is a ninkyō dantai faction. It militantly adheres to the spirit of the ninkyō code, and its reputation for professionalism is such that even the government secretly deals with the syndicate for jobs it doesn't want to dirty its hands with. Among the Syndicate's many ventures, it operates a legitimate private security company called **Shinogi Security**, staffed by guards with advanced lethal and non-lethal weaponry, and a nasty, hidden surprise: their tattoos grant them the powers of the nukekubi yōkai, allowing them to detach their heads and fly them around.

The Iribe-gumi's heavy investment in Sources led to its acquisition of a cabinet holding tsuchigumo spider yōkai eggs, giving the clan an advantage it intends to press. The cabinet speaks of a way to summon the queen of the tsuchigumo, by ritual sacrifices in front of mirrors at locations across the Megacity in order to replicate a specific spider-web pattern. When enough blood is shed in the appropriate way, the tsuchigumo queen of legend can be called to the Iribe-gumi's aid. Able to summon an army that's both real and illusory, she will allow the Iribe-gumi to force the other clans to believe they have no choice, but to swear allegiance to them. With this incredible threat to dangle above law enforcement and megacorp shareholders, they can enact the old Yakuza practice of extortion on an epic scale.

THE HOT-HEADED MAIKUBI-KAI

The official term used for Yakuza among the police and the courts of law is bōryokudan ("violent group"), a label meant to avoid the use of the name "Yakuza" as it carries a criminal mystique the clans have cultivated over hundreds of years. Several clans adopt this label wholeheartedly, with the most notorious being the **Maikubi-kai**, which deals in designer drugs, counterfeit cybernetics, red light entertainment, assassination contracts, illegal dogfights, and more. Having no qualms about clashing with the law, the clan leans into the criminal world and attracts lawless wannabes who try to make a name for themselves. Among the poor and disrespected, joining such a clan could mean having a real chance to make something of themselves and break out of the poverty cycle.

The Maikubi-kai apply traditional irezumi tattoos based on their namesake, the maikubi yōkai, a trio of fire-breathing severed samurai heads. The legend says three sinful samurai got drunk and began bickering, eventually cutting each other's heads. The members of the Maikubi-kai don't see themselves as samurai by any means, but they do like reaching consensus through constant bickering and tend to glorify bravado. The clan adopted the sign of the tomoe, a swirl of three drops, due to its association with the maikubi: the yōkai is said to hover over waves and in its movements create three magatama symbols.

The Maikubi-kai is most well-known for breeding inugami ("dog gods"), vicious bioengineered dog-like beasts which serve the clan as watchdogs and in dogfights. Though named after kami, these inugami are not touched by Mythoi and their incredible savagery is wholly natural (or more precisely, artificial) and serves as an excellent additional deterrent to their masters' fearsome reputation.

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GLOSSARY OF YAKUZA TERMS

Ane-san: "Big sister", a powerful female leader or a kumichō's wife who is also involved in directing the gang.

Bōryokudan: "Violent groups", the governmental term for Yakuza. In the public's eye, the word "Yakuza" plays to the romanticized ideals the Yakuza claim to hold, and to their mystique. Using a clear and negative term places them as criminals.

Bōsozuko: Yakuza motorcycle gang.

Chimpira: Hot headed kobun who stir up trouble.

Irezumi: "Inserting ink", traditional Japanese tattooing, usually in colorful full-body patterns. Previously outlawed, and historically associated with criminality and the Yakuza.

Kaikei: Accountants of the Yakuza.

Kobun: "Child-like", lowest ranking Yakuza gang members.

Kumichō: "Boss", the highest-ranking member of a Yakuza family.

Kyōdai: "Big brother", who runs a particular gang.

Ninkyō: A moral code some of the Yakuza adhere to.

Ninkyō Dantai: "Chivalrous organization", another term for Yakuza.

Oyabun: "Foster parent", another name for the kumichō.

Saikō-Komon: "Senior adviser", the rank below the kumichō.

Sakazuki: Traditional sake-sharing ceremony to induct someone into a Yakuza syndicate.

Shatei: "Little brother", supports the kyōdai.

Shateigashira: Leader of a particular region.

Sō-honbuchō: "Headquarters chief", in charge of the main holding of a Yakuza clan.

Yubitsume: "Finger-shortening", a ritual atonement involving removing the pinky.

Wakagashira: First lieutenant, responsible for carrying out the kumichō's orders.

Wakagashira-hosa: Underlings serving the kumichō and wakagashira directly.

Zetsuenjō: Traitors to the Yakuza, hunted by their former syndicate colleagues.

KEY CHARACTERS

The current oyabun of the Iribe-gumi is **DAICHI KURATA**, a mysterious figure who rarely has audiences with any but his closest advisers. Those petitioning for an introduction are more likely to meet with his wife, known as **MAMUSHI-SAMA** ("Lady Pit Viper"). In fact, Mamushi-sama is a nure-onna ("watery woman") yōkai with the body of a snake and the head of a woman. She uses sorcery to disguise her snake form, but her hair is always wet, draping across her shoulders. If she has any goals of her own she keeps them to herself, as she seems to follow Daichi's mandates and acts as his icy, demanding face.

A master brewer, Mamushi-sama prepares a special sake blend which she presents as a reward to members of the clan who perform their duties well. When consumed, this sake grants them the nukekubi powers for which the clan has become rightfully feared – the ability to detach their heads and fly around, intimidating and attacking their opponents. Just like her real identity, Mamushi-sama keeps the Source from which she creates this sake a secret. It can't be a coincidence that she has started distributing the sake soon after the beginning of their clan's war against a clan whose Mythical power is based on a yōkai of floating heads, but if there's some ritualistic intention behind this symbolic resemblance, for now, only she and Daichi Kurata are aware of it.

The kumichō of the Maikubi-kai calls himself **AKUGORŌ**, after one of the three legendary decapitated samurai. He is fond of the inugami and is a proficient handler, always escorted by two such monstrous dogs. Likewise named after the original Maikubi samurai, his wakagashira lieutenant is **KOSANTA** and his saikō-komon senior advisor is **MATASHIGE**, and together they are a formidable trio. They have failed to realize, however, that by deliberately attracting the legend they are falling into its patterns – and so they waste more and more meetings in arguing among themselves, and only then occasionally deciding to resolve their differences with a pit fight between their inugami.

KEY LOCATIONS

In the Tokyo Megacity, the Yakuza operate in the open. All-Yakuza office complexes were once common and acted as symbols of their presence, but due to governmental pressure their meetings have slowly migrated to residential areas and family restaurants on their turf.

For the Iribe-gumi Syndicate, the **SHINOGI SECURITY** corporate offices are their main public face and the building is bustling and eye-catching. Visitors first enter a lobby that is full of holographic projections of creatures from Japanese

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myth including cantering kirin (unicorn-like gentle gods) and ushi-oni (monstrous ox-headed spider-like beasts). Beyond this, there are exhibition rooms where the Shinogi Security trainees and weaponry can be demonstrated for potential clients. The company is also known for its articulated weapons that can be folded and hidden away, and these are subtly carried by trained employees throughout the Shinogi offices.

The Iribe-gumi's treasured cabinet with the tsuchigumo nest is hidden in an old bamboo grove in Higashikurumeshi Chikurin Park, in Old Tokyo. Now eerie and overgrown, the grove has a Thin Place (**THE TSUCHIGUMO MOUND**) accessible only by those with an irezumi spider tattoo inked with tsuchigumo venom. This webbed enclave and the cabinet inside is well-protected by vigilant nukekubi and ravenous tsuchigumo.

The Maikubi-kai favor watery environments that are advantageous for their maikubi powers, which they gain through their irezumi. Thus, they have claimed as their turf a kilometers-long system of tunnels called the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel (MAOUDC) or, more poetically, the **FLOODWATER CATHEDRAL**. These titanic cisterns, and the "floodwater cathedral" are meant to protect North Tokyo from flooding. The Maikubi-kai have added floating drug labs, inugami kennels, and other facilities for their operations throughout the floodwater diversion network, which they also use to quickly mobilize around the northern towns.

Above ground, the Maikubi-kai are most likely to be found in the illegal **INUZUMŌ ARENAS** ("dog sumo") they control throughout the Megacity, often found in clubs, pachinko parlors, or warehouses or open areas near urban ruins.

YAKUZA STORY HOOKS

- To make contact with a criminal lead the crew must attend an inuzumō fight at a Maikubi-kai arena. They anger the wrong hot-headed chimpira, and find themselves at odds with the Yakuza, running from a hoard of genetically-engineered monstrosities through the streets until the Yakuza's honor is satisfied. At that point the crew discovers the lead they're after has been made to disappear by the local kyōdai, who now conditions their release with a sizable tribute.
- A member of the Maikubi-kai escapes a kidnapping by the Iribe-gumi and asks the crew for help. They must



keep the escapee safe while figuring out why he's being chased; unbeknown to him, he saw too much of the Iribe-gumi's web ritual, and they need him silenced. As they smuggle him across town, the crew are in danger of being watched through every mirror they come across.

- The local Iribe-gumi front company gets utterly destroyed in a bizarre Mythic event, and even before the Bureau of Onmyō arrives, the crew are called in by a high ranking Iribe-gumi. She suspects someone in her clan is misusing their Sources, in a manner that creates catastrophic feedback across their delicately planned ritualistic patterns. Having been told by her superior not to engage any further, she secretly hires the crew to infiltrate the Iribe-gumi, search for the cause, and get rid of it.
- A Yakuza syndicate from outside the Megacity is making a play for a powerful position in Tokyo. Seemingly from nowhere they have released powerful computer viruses into the Megacity's systems as a show of strength and are demanding concessions from the other clans in the Megacity in return for destroying the viruses. The crew is approached by the Megacity's strongest Yakuza clans, who very much dislike the new competition and in particular, consider it a stain on their reputation that they are the victims of an extortion attempt themselves. They need the crew's expertise in tracking down where the virus is being controlled from and eliminating the source, offering their own members as assistance.

YAKUZA CHALLENGES

Typical Yakuza can be represented by these Challenges: Leaders are **Criminal Overlord** and frontliners are **Syndicate Leg Breaker** and **Gang Members** (*Metro:Otherscape*, pages 306-307). They could have the **Horimono** Power Set, as well as many others – Yakuza members have a wide variety of skills and attitudes. Add the clan-specific Power Sets to create Iribe-gumi and Maikubi-kai Challenges.

TSUCHIGUMO

As proficient extortionists, the strongest tool available to the Iribe-gumi is their tsuchigumo yōkai, stealthy spider-demons that were bound to the syndicate years ago. The tsuchigumo are the stuff of nightmares, their spidery bodies are the size of horses with twisted versions of human faces leering out from their mass of legs.

A tsuchigumo's form is usually hidden beneath camouflaging sorceries that allow it to move unseen and unheard. The yōkai still must fit through openings, although it can squeeze its body down to the size of a human child.

The tsuchigumo are bred in the clan's secretive Tsuchigumo Mound, from which they are also sent out on spying missions. A tsuchigumo excels at spying and especially relishes the discovery of embarrassing secrets, which they enthusiastically bring back as blackmail material to their Yakuza masters.

When a tsuchigumo dies, its belly can be split open to reveal even more human faces inside it and these create *embarrassing whispers*, the creepy, but truthful words of its last spying target, spoken by one of the faces.

MAMUSHI-SAMA

The wife of the Iribe-gumi Syndicate boss is greatly feared even by those who don't know her yōkai nature. The nure-onna is quiet and watchful, but exudes a predatory aura that makes even the most confident of Yakuza soldiers sweat when meeting with her. The sorceries that Mamushi-sama uses to disguise herself create the image of a slender, elegant Japanese woman, often dressed in tight-fitting clothes that allow for quick movement. Her hair is usually covered with a silk scarf to hide the telltale sign of a nure-onna – it is always wet.

In legend, nure-onna sometimes deliver babies to people which then turn into burdens that weigh them down while other yōkai hunt them down. Mamushi-sama does the same with gifts, valuables or weapons that suddenly weigh hundreds of pounds at the worst possible moment.

When she gives such a gift, create an appropriate story tag representing a relic, a weapon or a piece of jewelry. Later, she can turn this gift into a massively heavy weight as a Consequence, without being present in the scene.

INUGAMI

Inugami are genetically-modified attack hounds, created based on the Japanese Tosa breed, but far removed enough to be considered a separate species. The Maikubi-kai have bioengineered these massive beasts to ignore pain, regenerate fast, and inflict traumatic damage.

The highly intelligent inugami fight in Yakuza-controlled dog fighting arenas, and their obedience is such that a worthy handler can train one to be utterly silent even in battle. The Maikubi-kai also sell its weaker inugami to other groups, keeping the strongest for the clan to deploy in the arena or put on watchdog duty.

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MAMUSHI-SAMA

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 5 **NEGOTIATE 5** **OUTSMART 5**

TAGS & STATUSES

ane-san of the Iribe-gumi, *snake sorceries*, *illusory disguise*

SPECIALS

NURE-ONNA FORM: Once per scene, during Establish, Mamushi-sama can reveal her true form as a massive snake yōkai dozens of meters long and powerful enough to crush a car in her coils. The reveal inflicts *terrified-3* and she gains *surprising speed* and Scale 2.

BODYGUARDS: In a scene where she has allies present, when she would take a physical status, Mamushi-sama can instead have an ally take the status. Use Mercenary Gunslinger or Syndicate Leg-Breaker (*Metro:Otherscape* page 307) with Scale 1 and the Iribe-gumi Power Set (page 227).

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Stay completely still and watch with a predatory gaze and an unnerving smile*
- » **Make cutting, veiled warnings (*nervous-1*) or outright threats (*intimidated-3*)**
- » **Reveal an important secret she is aware of and threaten what she might do with it (*blackmailed-5*)**

› *Promise this will not be the end of the discussion*
- » **Send a tsuchigumo to spy on the character (Present a New Challenge: Tsuchigumo)**

› *Snap suddenly and fluidly into motion*
- » **Attack with razor-sharp knives laced with snake venom (*grievous-wound-4* and, if any tier remains after mitigation, *poisoned-5*)**

› *In her true form, rush forward in a snaking movement, shaking the ground*
- » **Strike with lightning speed and venomous fangs (*bleeding-3* and, if any tier remains after mitigation, *poisoned-5*; alternatively, remove up to two defensive tags or status tiers)**
- » **Writhe and crush everyone in the area, friend or foe (*crushed-4* to everyone present)**
- » **Lash out with powerful coils to destroy a large object or damage a structure (Escalate the Situation)**

» **Make a gift she gave someone magically heavy at the most inopportune time (burn the item's tags and inflict *encumbered-5*)**

TSUCHIGUMO [IRIBE-GUMI]

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3

TAGS & STATUSES

climber, *eight-legged*, *horrifying*, *magically-hidden-3*, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *There's a sound of something crawling along the ceiling*

› *Lick its mandibles with a horrible, lolling tongue*
- » **Loom out of the shadows with a horrific visage (*fear-3*)**
- » **Strike an opponent or two (*crushed-3* and *knockdown-3*, and remove one tier from *magically-hidden-1*)**
- » **Bite with fangs (*poisoned-3*, and remove one tier from *magically-hidden-1*)**

» **Retreat and vanish (gain *magically-hidden-3*)**

» **Eavesdrop on an important conversation to report back (Escalate the Situation)**

» **Skitter into a small opening to escape (Deny Them Something They Want)**

INUGAMI

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **SCARE 5** **TURN AGAINST HANDLER –**

TAGS & STATUSES

pain tolerance, *monster dog*, *vicious-3*, *silent-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Growl and bare teeth, dripping acid drool, ready to lunge*
- » **Spring forward and bite viciously (burn a protective item tag and then *deep-gash-3* and *gripped-2*)**
- » **Jump to cut off escape or push to the corner (*surrounded-2*)**

› *Tighten their grip, growling incessantly*
- » **Tear flesh and break bones of someone *gripped* by their bite (*torn-limb-5*)**

› *Sniff around, picking up a scent*
- » **Track someone or notice them (Escalate the situation or remove two tiers from a stealth status)**

› *Their gaping wounds begin to froth and bubble*
- » **Regenerate (remove one tier from a physical harm status)**

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POWER SETS

General Tokyo Power Sets (page 131) that pair well with the Yakuza Challenges include Local To Ward, Mountain Of Muscle, Mounted Gunslinger, Ritual-Honoring Fighter, Street Fighting, Uncanny Bare-Hands Warrior, Exoskeleton Operator, and Ishoku-Nano Paint.

SELF POWER SET

IRIBE-GUMI

Professional in their attire and methods, the Iribe-gumi specialize in appearing to be always in control – and through this menacing position, they do indeed attain control. When appearances are not enough, then blackmail or a hidden weapon can be drawn in an instant, and change the odds in their favor.

The best among the Iribe-gumi are given a Touched sake brewed by Mamushi-sama herself, which grants them the powers of the nukekubi yōkai. Seemingly a regular human, a nukekubi can detach its head so it floats around and acts independently from the rest of the body. Both can sense the world around them and act under the same mind. Once a head detaches it can exist on its own if the body dies, but only by drinking blood at least once an hour.

TAGS & STATUSES

cold professionalism, *hidden weapons*, *loyal-3*

SPECIALS

TRANSFORMING WEAPON: On their first violent action in the scene, this Challenge gains *fast-draw-2*.

NUKEKUBI (+): The Iribe-gumi is able to detach their head from their body during Establish, inflicting *unnerved-2* on all non-Iribe-gumi. It can fly back to the body as a Threat and re-attach as a Consequence.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Switch their weapon to anti-cyberware mode*
» **Fire a disrupting bolt (*gun-shot-3* and *jammed-3*)**

› *Nukekubi: The head floats and twists in the air*
» **Move in two separate directions while the body distracts from the floating head (*unnerved-2* and the head gains *hidden-2*)**
» **Distract a target while the body shoots at them (*distracted-2* and then *gun-shot-3*)**
» **Bite into the target's exposed flesh and draw its blood for sustenance (*bleeding-2* and the head removes two tiers from any physical harm status)**
» **Escape through a window (Deny Them Something they Want)**

MYTHOS POWER SET

HORIMONO

While 'irezumi' means any kind of tattoo – especially the ones the Yakuza are famous for – horimono refers to a specific traditional, full-body style of tattoos. The clans of the Megacity use special inks to imbue their members with powers Touched by the ink's Source.

Each horimono has a shudai (central theme), usually based on a core principle the clan believes in, often symbolized in an animal. Examples include a Tiger, symbolizing bravery; Dragon, symbolizing strength; yōkai, symbolizing unearthly might; or Carp, symbolizing the overcoming of obstacles.

TAGS & STATUSES

mystical protection

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Adopt a mystic stance*
» **Become infused with the power of the horimono (gain an appropriate tier-2 status such as *emboldened-2*, *empowered-2*, *focus-2*, or *shielded-2*)**

SELF POWER SET

MAIKUBI-KAI

Members of the Maikubi-kai are usually easily identified: Their tomoe-marked business suits are open in a casual manner, their weapons are in full display, their tattoos shine with holo amplification, they're either drunk or high, and they've got more attitude than the peak of Mount Fuji. It's also all-to-easy to underestimate them as unsophisticated bullies, and to forget that these are some of the most powerful Yakuza in Tokyo.

Maikubi-kai who prove their devotion, loyalty, and skills, are awarded with an irezumi of their clan's tomoe, granting them some of the powers of the maikubi yōkai.

TAGS & STATUSES

rude, *drug-boost-2*, *loyal-3*

SPECIALS

NOT FAIR: The Challenge adds one of the following to their melee weapons – *electrified*, *spiked*, or *poisoned* – and deals an appropriate status with their attacks.

TOMOE IREZUMI (+): Once per scene, during Establish, the Maikubi-kai can turn their body and gear *insubstantial-2* for a few moments, but their head remains solid.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Say something offensive just to spite*
» **Press on when they see it's working (*angry-2*)**

› *Tomoe Irezumi: The tomoe tattoos begin to swirl*
» **Breathe fire (*burned-3*)**

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MEMBERSHIP

The Yakuza recruit new members from gamblers, criminals, and the marginalized. Their hierarchy is based on the oyabun-kobun (parent-child) structure, with strong bonds of loyalty fostered to their elders at every level from kumichō to new recruits.

A sake-sharing ceremony called sazazuki initiates someone into the Yakuza family, an important event during which they get introduced to their future bosses and comrades. Respect and prestige is earned over years as one rises through the ranks by showing respect, loyalty, obedience, and results. A player can have a Yakuza character by picking the Tattooed Yakuza Recruit trope (page 43) or use the Yakuza Membership theme kit (page 59).

Leaving the Yakuza can be achieved in two ways. If a clan member can convince their superior that they will be no threat to them, they can leave after having had their name removed from the Yakuza registry. Alternatively, if a clan believes one of its own has betrayed the clan, they are ousted and branded a zetsuenjō, a traitor, reviled, possibly even hunted.

Tropes: Tattooed Yakuza Recruit (page 43)

Theme Kits: Yakuza Membership (page 59)

YAKUZA CATALOG

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Shinogi Security Collapsible Tactical Rifle	A miracle of industrial design, this full-power tactical rifle can be broken down and reshaped into an innocuous object such as a sculptural belt or gorget, or a walking cane.	***collapsible tactical rifle***, *full auto, difficult to detect, AR targeting shades*	*short clip*
Inugami Bio-Engineered Guard Dog	The Maikubi-kai sell their weaker fighting dogs to interested parties of sufficient underworld clout, equipping their allies with these brutal companions.	***bio-engineered guard dog***, *vicious, acid bite, fast regeneration*	*lose control*
Tsuchigumo	The Iribe-gumi never allow outsiders into their Mound, but if someone with the appropriate Esoteric knowledge to obtain an egg, they could summon a full-size tsuchigumo.	***tsuchigumo yōkai***, *magical camouflage, venomous bite, discreet spy*	*requires magic to control*
Carp-styled Obstacle-Overcoming Horimono	It takes a special artist and significant time to tattoo a horimono, and the shifting, magical ink requires constant touch ups, but such a masterpiece will protect its bearer for the rest of their lives.	***obstacle-overcoming horimono***, *lucky survival, power leap, mental fortitude*	*associated with criminality*

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VIRAL MOVEMENTS

Out of control memeplexes, running wild in the Tokyo Megacity cultural sphere

The movements presented here are but a taste of what Tokyo has to offer. Some have links to Sources, drawing on the powers of the forgotten past. Some are fueled by the latest in technology. All share their adherents' burning desire for meaning while trying to survive their time in the bright, violent, indifferent Megacity.

Property of

HANKO SEALS

Hanko are the small seals used by the citizens of the Tokyo Megacity to sign or initial all documents, formal and informal, digital and analog. The practice of using a personal seal has existed in the culture for centuries and has evolved to meet the needs of the modern users.

Modern hanko seals are similar in appearance to the stamps of old, but while traditionally their cylinders would be simple ink stamps, they now have embedded data cores, connecting the devices to secure cyberspace servers. A person's seal is a personal encrypted token, unique to them alone. This functionality allows the user to sign digital documents and authenticate themselves in cyberscape.

A strange property of the hanko allows some individuals to use their seals to create magic. The Bureau of Onmyō is still investigating how these tools, used for centuries, are now able to perform supernatural acts, and it has developed two main theories. One is that when the Neo-Samurai took over the old imperial palace, the Emperor's seal was disturbed and lost. This powerful Relic is now bleeding magical power sympathetically to all hanko in Japan, allowing skilled practitioners to create magic. The other theory goes that the modern, cyber-hanko has become a complete representation of their owner in all the ways that matter to society. This increased similarity between person and object allows some people to place a small portion of their spirit within the seal.

Regardless of the reason, people who become hanko users learn that they must invest a part of their spirit in the seal, and that through the careful selection of construction materials, ink composition, and color, they can use their seals to affect small changes in their personal fortune. There are many users, and because the effects can be minor without proper guidance, some don't even realize they're practicing magic.

Private circles of hanko users are now operating out of small boutiques throughout the Megacity. Each of these store fronts sell bespoke seal designs and inks, and aren't considered all that unusual by the rest of the Megacity; most simply see this as yet another obscure hobby. **Daichi Inda**, proprietor of the **Red Ink Shop**, runs what is considered the most prestigious hanko circle. Its members are the closest Tokyo has to professional hanko users, swapping new recipes and design tenets, and placing a high value on experimentation. Those wanting entry should come with a substantial collection of spell recipes already mastered. There is also a growing market for stolen hanko, as skilled users can use them to magically spoof the owner for a day, appearing as them both in the real world as well as in the digital.

POWER SETS

MYTHOS POWER SET

HANKO ENTHUSIAST

There is power in names. This Challenge learned how to invest some of themselves into their personal hanko seal, which bears their name and therefore represents them. This allows them some measure of protection and control over their own fate.

Hanko hinders any action taken against the good name of this Challenge, meaning their reputation, image, legal standing, financial credit, business partnerships, etc. If the *hanko* is in the hands of others, they can use it for the opposite purpose, making it easier for them to damage the standing of the *hanko*'s owner via any means, mundane or magical.

TAGS & STATUSES

hanko

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Produce the hanko and press a button to activate it*
» **Sign a physical or digital document (*magically-binding-2*)**
» **Stamp an object or location (create a magical story tag such as *seal of warding*, *seal of encryption*, or *seal of deception*)**

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HANKO CATALOG

The following hanko spells can be developed or bought by a character with the Hanko Seal Magic theme kit (page 60) or some other hanko-related power tag. Hanko spells typically work the same in cyberspace as in physical space.

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Cloaked Passage	Placing a seal on a door or a window can cloak it, making it blend into the wall so no one realizes it's there. The seal typically lasts until the next dusk.	***cloaked passage***, *deserted places, affect a whole building, muffle sound*	*animal senses*
Curse of Pain	Stamping your seal on someone's skin can bind them with a potent curse.	***painful curse***, *disrupt spells, compelling oath, uncontrollable shakes*	*ritual cleansing*
Curse of Truth	A stamp on a person's forehead causes them pain when they lie to you, though it cannot compel the truth.	***curse of truth***, *agonizing pain, one-on-one, wipe memory*	*weaker digitally*
Open Lock	By placing your seal on a locked door, or a digital barrier in cyberspace, you attempt to make the force of your identity overwhelm the authority of the lock's owner, so it opens before you.	***open lock***, *open blocked passage, stronger if the owner is absent, silent action*	*Mythic barriers*
Protective Seal	Putting your stamp on an item or your outer garments provides some protection from knives and bullets, or thieves.	***protective seal***, *warded clothing, theft alarm, deters filth*	*weaker on things I don't own*
Scry	Having another person's hanko allows a practitioner to view that person through a scrying tool such as gazing into incense smoke, observing a pool of water, etc.	***Scry***, *trace and locate, capture datastream, whisper a message*	*sacred places*
Seal the Area	Placing a seal on the ground or wall allows you to make a small area into a private sanctum, sealed from intrusion.	***seal the area***, *block entry, larger area, repel yōkai*	*Thin Places*
Shadowed Landscape	Placing this spell on a stamp makes the area around it full of surreal, writhing with frightening shadowy illusions.	***shadowed landscape***, *silent spaces, shadow minions, terrify to the bone*	*bright light*
Spoofing Glamor	Having another person's hanko seal allows the stamp mage to impersonate that person using this spell, with the glamor typically holding until the first dawn after casting.	***spoofing glamor***, *perfect impersonation, digital authentication, instant change*	*methodical examination*

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KAWAII MASK STREAMERS

The ubiquity of cybernetics and neural interfaces paved the way for the development of various technologies allowing for an outside agent to control a user's body, all existing on a spectrum of questionable legality. Early developers marketed them as forms of prisoner control, but it was clear that nefarious actors were using the tech as a modern form of indentured work. The bulky head-mounted devices, dubbed "masks", became a symbol of corporate overreach.

Wanting to move away from the negative image, the conglomerate Rodo Group shifted strategies, marketing masks to the massive gig economy. Workers could sign up for shifts, using corporate-backed contracts to choose the labor they were and were not willing to perform. The tech could use memory compartmentalization software which would prevent long term memory from forming for its duration, giving the employers anonymity and the users plausible deniability. The system was regularly abused, but because of Rodo's efforts to keep all aspects anonymous, the practice shifted into the Megacity economy.

This all changed with **Himura Aiko**. After spending one night shift masked, Aiko returned to her small apartment to try and sleep before her afternoon classes. An architectural student, Aiko had started taking mask jobs to pay for school. Her expanding costs had led her to select the fewest restrictions on her mask contracts as possible, trying to earn the most so she could minimize her student loan. Checking the feeds before sleep, a breaking story caught her attention. Several masked individuals were caught on camera liberating a local zoo. The masked individuals also engaged in some spectacular acrobatic combat with corporate security, their skills obviously enhanced through the masks' interface. Aiko realized she was one of the individuals; it was particularly easy to recognize her thanks to a strangely shaped splotch of paint that was left on the mask from a different task the



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night before. Clipping the image, she casually posted to her friends and family that she was one of animal liberators, and how she never knew she had such skills. The post, titled "I'm the one with the blotch!", then went viral with hundreds of thousands of views, all amused at this young student's nocturnal antics, inadvertently giving rise to the Kawaii Mask movement.

Users craving viral fame began to buy masks and redesign them with outrageously cute characteristics, holo projectors, and swarms of slaved streaming drones to follow and record them. Kawaii wanna-be-mascots now spend as much time as possible masked, marking as few restrictions on their contracts as possible, in the hope of getting hired to perform some job that will create the next viral video. They stream reaction videos of their own work, surprised at what they're doing, and trying to guess what's going on. On the fringes of the community there are maskers who are trying to game the system that keeps client and masker anonymous, issuing contracts tailored for themselves in hope of getting them and thus gain control over their activities – whether they disclose this bit of information or not. Many in the audience consider this an ingenious trick, but most call this "taking a faker" because they cherish the authenticity of the masker's activities, feeling excitement and dread along with the masker as they discover what they've done – or, as is sometimes the case, when their video is published posthumously.

KAWAII MASK ASSASSIN

The Rodo Group's draconian efforts to keep contracts confidential, and the memory inhibiting effects of the masks has paved the way for criminals to take advantage of these gig workers. The Tokyo government is slow to act, and it's yet unclear if a Kawaii video is admissible in court as evidence. Enter: the masked assassin.

Kawaii maskers whose skills and physique qualifies them to become assassins often slot skill chips that grant them gymnastic flair and dance moves, to turn the assassination into a staged spectacle. Others program a trigger into their device so that before the attack begins the device auto-calls all of their friends and broadcasts their holo images around, to create a flash mob. Some popular maskers have begun to stipulate in their contracts demands for staging or timing, meant to maximize online views. This results with attacks that are disturbing to watch, and often go viral.

As a Challenge, place the Assassin in a position where the crew wants to prevent them from getting to their target, while avoiding harming the Assassin or getting too close – and risk becoming part of the video! *Viral-fame* statuses given by this Challenge represent gaining recognition, but not necessarily respect, as the crew members are considered background extras and the Kawaii masker is the real star.

Removing a Kawaii mask without going through proper procedure, which takes about ten seconds to complete, can send the user into a coma and grants Rodo Group the right to sue the 'helper' (*legal-troubles-4*). Such an abrupt disconnection could also send the spirit of the masker right into the hands of the Yuki-onna cyber yōkai (page 99).

KAWAII MASK ASSASSIN

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **JAM SIGNAL 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

boosted-reflexes-2, *firewalled-1*, *no-one's-home-3*

SPECIALS

MORAL QUALMS: Kawaii Mask Assassins don't know the jobs they are going to be forced to perform, and are usually young adults just trying to get famous. A PC attacking a Kawaii Mask Assassin in a way that would harm them first takes *guilty-2* or *hesitating-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Cartwheel into the scene, their device announcing their catchphrase*
- » **Parkour across the battlefield towards the target (gain *superior-position-2* and *dodging-2*)**
- » **Mock with a cute voice (*viral-fame-1* to anyone nearby)**

› *A camera drone flies about*
- » **The drone gets in the way (*distracted-2*) or interferes with transmissions (burn a tech tag or *jammed-2*)**
- » **The drone begins following the PC's actions (*viral-fame-2*)**

› *Start dancing an exaggerated version of the latest viral dance trend*
- » **Kick or shoot an object out from an adversary's grip (burn a tag)**
- » **Make a stylish attack with a sponsored brand named weapon (*bloody-wound-3* and *viral-fame-1*)**
- » **Kill their target while livestreaming (Make The Future Bleaker)**

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KUMO RACING CLUBS

Extreme vehicle competitions have long been a popular staple of Tokyo's night scene. The increasingly vertical nature of the Megacity has led to an evolution of the sport, with Kumo clubs emerging to take the place of underground racing, and being just as illegal.

Originally used in construction and maintenance, Kumo ("cloud") Crawlers, or just "crawlers" are modified robotic rigs that can easily climb up the side of skyscrapers, and even leap from building to building.

Crawlers gain their name from their spider-like appearance, with many legs coming out of a central hub where the pilot resides.

Racers using crawlers risk not just themselves, but the "racecourse" as well, because of the heavy machinery's incredible strength and its tendency to leave huge gouges wherever they grasp concrete with their claws. If that's not enough, it's common practice to conceal weapons in the central chassis or limbs, with most races becoming more about being the first to take down your opponent's crawler rather than getting to the finish line. Technically, pilots are considered off limits from direct attack, but that rule is rarely enforced once a match begins.

Kumo matches find popularity across all of the Megacity's classes, and large crowds pay good money to be told where the next race is expected to happen, in order to watch the bout live. This is actually very dangerous as debris and the crawlers themselves tend to fall from the buildings unpredictably. Betting is a huge part of Kumo club culture, with wagers placed not only on the outcome of the fight, but the damage done to the buildings and crowd.

The collateral damage to any district where a race is staged makes the sport unpopular with the Megacity's corporations, and all but the quickest matches inevitably end with corporate security becoming involved; "and the siren marks the end", as VR commentators like to say. The most prestigious pilots try to last long enough for security to arrive, then defeat their opponent, corp security, *and* successfully make a getaway. Given that they are acting within their own property, corporate security is often reluctant to act with full force. This often leaves them at a disadvantage to the crawler pilots who have no such restraint. A few security specialists have started taking up crawler piloting to fight spider with spider, and ironically developed followings of their own.

Kumo clubs are loose associations, combinations of sporting clubs and DIY enclaves. An individual pilot will have a whole team behind them, with robotic engineers, software developers, weapon specialists, immersive media gurus, and more. The cost of maintaining such an enterprise is expensive, and many teams do mercenary work on the side as couriers, or discreet construction or demolition. Often they are paid by corps to deliberately damage a rival corp's holdings during their next race. These contracts, while lucrative, come with a host of associated enemies.

KUMO CRAWLER

TAGS & STATUSES

A crawler is sometimes brought in as an auxiliary security or scout on corp missions. They crawl on walls with their spider-like appendages, quietly getting into positions with advanced acrobatic piloting, ready to strike. Always look up.

LIMITS

WRECK 5

TAGS & STATUSES

climbs quickly, *durable build*, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Some pebbles fall from above*
- » **The Kumo strikes (*surprised-3* and then one of the attacks below)**
- » **It's actually a holographic double (gain *holographic decoy* and inflict *exposed-3*)**

› *Open weapon chambers*
- » **Deploy a weapon such as electrified net (*entangled-3* and *shocked-3*), glue cannon (*stuck-4*), metal eating acid (burn a tag of a metallic object), tear gas bombs (*choking-3*), or a high-speed hydraulic cannon (*perforated-4*)**

› *Rev custom engines*
- » **Ascend along a vertical surface (gain *height-advantage-3*)**
- » **Leap to a distant surface, out of reach or out of sight (Deny Them Something They Want)**
- » **Make an effort to win a race (*win-race-1* or *outrun-1*)**

› **The pilot goads with taunts over radio or speaker (*provoked-3*)**
- » **Cause expensive collateral damage (Escalate the Situation and inflict *buried-4* on everyone below)**

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TEZUMA STAGE MAGIC

Tokyo's creator market is caught in an endless fight to pierce the cacophony of delights and get the people's attention.

As often happens during times of a rapid artistic development. Nostalgia becomes commodified and the past becomes an endless vault worthy of exploitation.

Tezuma, also called wazuma, is a classic form of stage magic or illusion, predating the arrival of western magic shows by a couple of centuries. Tezuma has had several revivals, and its style is perfect for the agenda of analog culturalists, eager for an affected past. You can always tell a true tezuma performer, marked by their traditional silk kimono, paper parasols, and real wood fans. The symbol of their art, the butterfly, is always made out of real paper.

As the art form re-emerged into a Mythoi-filled world, practitioners started to realize that they had gained the ability and knowledge to create true, impossible to explain illusions, and to facilitate transformations that the most advanced industrial nanite decompilers would struggle with. It has become somewhat accepted among the tezuma performers, in their inner circles, that the magical nature of their skills is a gift, a blessing from the kami Susanoo, younger brother of Amaterasu, a capricious being who likes to stir things up.

The classic tezuma performances weren't just about wonder and spectacle, but also about story and metaphor, delivering a message and teaching a lesson. Therefore, some of the modern practitioners have come to believe they have a divine duty to the Megacity of Tokyo, that they need to teach the people in power a lesson in humility. They're now on a mission to take the material things coveted by the powerful and corrupt, some infiltrating board rooms as hired wizards while others run high-stakes heists and steal valuable goods from their marks among the elite. On occasion this puts them at odds with a crew of mercs, who are going after the exact same item.

Tezuma performers operate wherever there are large crowds, from busy intersections to popular theaters. Many performers wander, never staying in one location for more than an afternoon. It is part of their mystique, but also necessary for their hidden mission, as they are usually either on the run or scouting a new mark. If they do stay put, it is almost certain that they are casing their next heist or scam. To heighten their elusiveness and mastery of their craft, tezuma performers love to leave a calling card after a take, usually a piece of origami, replacing what is stolen.

Tezuma is taught through an informal system of apprenticeships. **Satō Hiroshi**, possibly the most famous of the performers, prefers to recruit his apprentices from those orphaned by the Yakuza clans. He sees the path to tezuma mastery as a path to salvation, revealing to those criminally inclined a more moral, socially-aware way of using their skills.

TEZUMA MAGICIAN

TAGS & STATUSES

Is it a trick, or is it actual magic? A bit of both. The Tezuma Magician is a master of stagecraft, sleight of hand, and even real magical effects. They have the ability to animate folded paper versions of real objects and creatures, and can even cause real objects to swap places with paper versions of them, so they can make off with the real item.

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 **ESCAPE 3**

ESCAPE: The Magician escapes the scene with their loot, **Deny Them Something They Want**.

TAGS & STATUSES

master of their craft, *one step ahead*, *scam artist*

SPECIALS

SELF ILLUSION: Once per scene, when the Tezuma Magician would take a harmful physical or magical status, they can avoid this status as it turns out that it was an illusion of the magician, who is actually somewhere else in the area.

LOOK AGAIN: Once per scene, when a player invokes a power tag for an item, it is revealed to be a transformed piece of paper as it reverts back; burn the tag and inflict *surprised-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Release paper butterflies from their robes and use a wooden fan to lead them in an intricate dance*
- » **The paper butterfly swarm engulfs someone (*distracting-swarm-2*)**
- » **The butterflies fly through a magical barrier or across Nearspace (burn a tag of a magical effect or in cyberspace)**

› *Perform a trick using a small effect such as a flame, a spray of water, or a burst of paper streamers*
- » **Make an item vanish and replace it with an origami replica (burn a tag and gain it for themselves)**

› *Weave a captivating tale full of wisdom*
- » **Get someone thinking (*considering-2*, *distracted-2*, or *self-doubt-2*) and get closer to the exit (gain *escape-1*)**
- » **A weapon, tool, or ally the PC just prepared is revealed to have been a transformed item or animal, as it reverts back (burn a story tag previously created by the player)**
- » **Get closer to the exit (gain *escape-1*)**

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YAKUBYŌ GAMI ROAMERS

The twisted landscape of the Meido wastelands (page 34) have become a hotbed of yōkai activity. Spiritual energy pours out from the Megacity and gets tainted and entangled in the clusters of abandoned towns, toxic dumps, and old tech facilities, where yōkai can manifest and easily find a place to hide. Perhaps the worst of these places is the Kuroi Yogore ("black stain"), where the Nanotech Disaster (page 14) began.

The biotech company Kenko invested billions in the development of a cure-all nano-shot and geoengineering reconstructors, in an attempt to reshape the medical market and heal a dying planet. Instead they created the first nano-plague.

The Yakubyō Gami ("disease spirits") are ancient and powerful kami bent on punishing mortals for their transgressions against each other and against the natural order. When a mortal acts out of place – in the eyes of the spirits – the Yakubyō Gami send disease and pestilence as a punishment. With the modern resurgence of Mythoi, the Kuroi Yogore disaster area attracted the Yakubyō Gami like bees to honey.

Residents of the wastes know to avoid the deserted and closed off nanotech facility, and stay clear of the entire mountainous region around it. A few, however, chose to head straight in. Nozawa Emiko, fourth generation storyteller living in the wastes, had gathered a group of allies and went to see the Yakubyō Gami. Armed with her stories, Nozawa Emiko approached the spirits, believing that she could engage with them and gain immunity from the illnesses that so many in the wastelands face. Impressed by her boldness, the Yakubyō Gami agreed to give her the immunity she sought, in trade for a service from her and her followers. And so, the Yakubyō Gami Roamers were formed, nomadic agents of the yōkai in the wastes.

The Roamers serve two purposes for the Yakubyō Gami. The first is as a network of spies in the wastelands. They travel constantly, carefully recording the goings on of both the human and nonhuman activities in the wastes. In the distant past, the Yakubyō Gami used to rely on the spying of other kami to inform them who trespassed, but the kami of the wastes are unruly, anxious, and unreliable. They resolved to employ the Roamers as their informers, instead.



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The second task is to deliver punishments that the Yakubyō Gami believe are due. These punishments can be devastating plagues, life-threatening illnesses, or even selective and personal biological changes such as losing eyesight, developing a bleeding sore on one's palms, or growing horns. As a part of their service to the kami, the Roamers are rendered immune to the symptoms of most diseases or infections, thanks to Yakubyō Gami's blessing – which is held in the nano-disease the Roamers carry in their veins.

Many communities are fearful of "Roamer Justice", especially those who know they deserve it, and the more lawless a place is the more hostile its denizens are likely to be toward strangers. It can be argued whether the Roamers truly deliver justice or simply serve spiteful inhumane spirits, but the end result is the same – the wastes are calmer and less chaotic than they were several years ago. Fear brought order, and so despite it all, many wastelanders accept the Roamers as a necessary evil.

The Yakubyō Gami themselves and the Kuroi Yogore appear in the job *The Kenko Ruins*, page 272.

THE ROAMERS AS ADVERSARIES

The Roamers are capable spies and scouts, and there's probably at least one or two of them in every settlement, integrated into the local society or stopping by undercover as merchants. When it's time to inflict judgment, two or three of them arrive at the town, wearing their signature brown armor and dust goggles, and no one dares stand in their way as they approach their target and give their sentence.

In ancient times, those with knowledge of spirit lore could protect themselves from the kami who spied for the Yakubyō Gami, hiding from them using proper ritual acts. In modern times, the same practices can *ward* one against the Roamers' nanites, which are imbued with the taint of the Yakubyō Gami yōkai. For this reason, the Roamers do their best to hunt down anyone with this knowledge and dispose of them.

A *Yakubyō Gami spying talisman* can be any object that a Shinto priest or knowledgable Esoteric Mythos has infused with occluding power to protect an individual from the wrath of the Yakubyō Gami. There are still some of these laying around the wastes, minor Sources hundreds of years old, such as sacred beads, incense bundles, family relics, amulets, and prayer scrolls. A person with this talisman in their possession can potentially misuse it to avoid punishment for their wrongdoing.

YAKUBYŌ GAMI ROAMERS

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 | **INFECT, DRUG, OR POISON –**

TAGS & STATUSES

local disguise or *makeshift armor*, *alert-2*, *zeal-2*

SPECIALS

BODY OF DISEASE: Touching or attacking a Roamer at close range inflicts *coughing-1*, *fever-1*, or *shaking-1*.

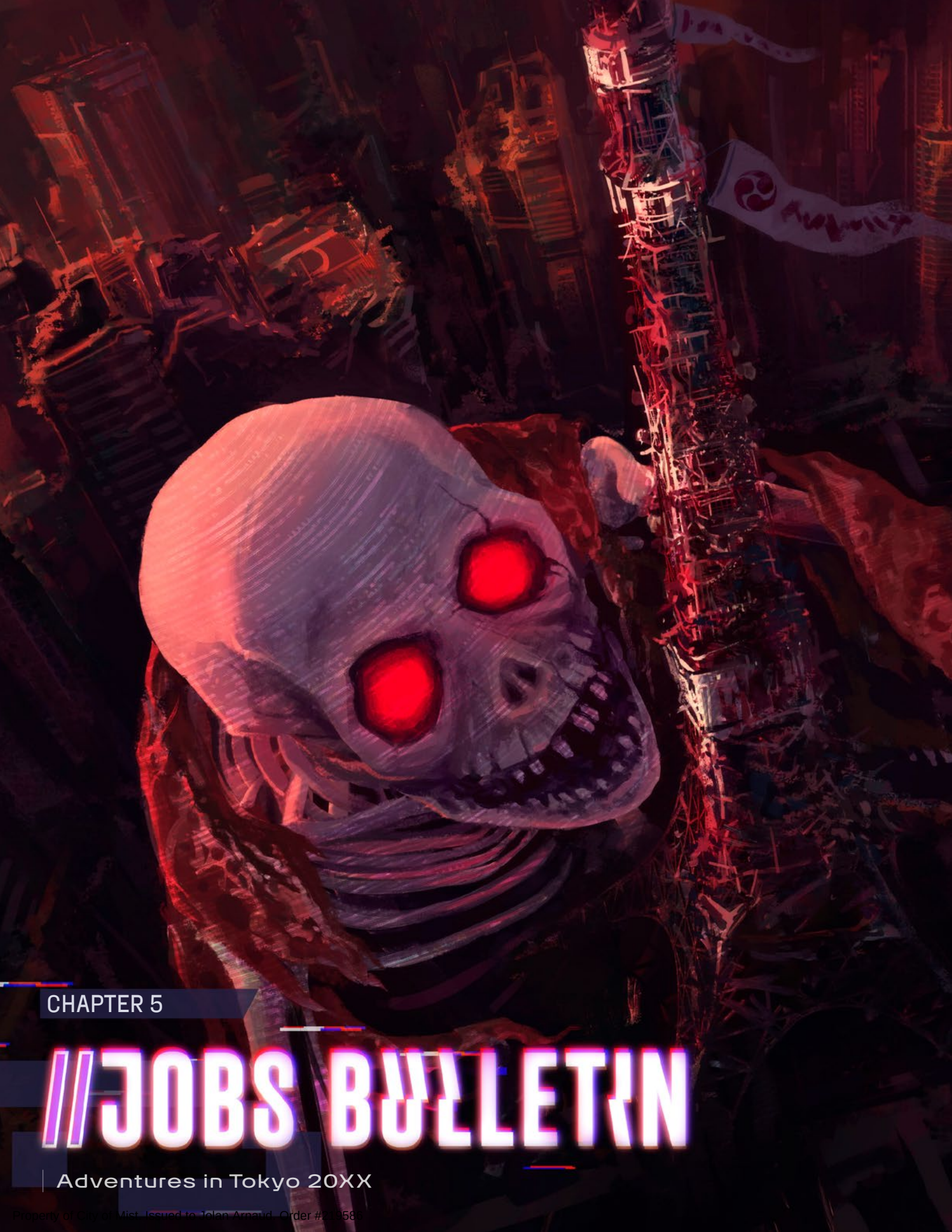
›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Coughs wet and loud, releasing a strange cloud*
» **Surround themself with a cloud of viscous bio-nanites (*violent-spasms-3* to everyone in the area)**

› *Demand the culprit come forward*
» **The people around grab the victim and push them forward (Escalate the Situation or Make the Future Bleaker)**
» **Release nanites into the air (*deadly plague*, *deforming disease*, or *contagious hallucination* at one Scale greater than the Roamer collective)**

› *Swing a cobbled-together outlands staff*
» **Hit the chest and sweep the legs (*bruised-2* and *prone-2*)**
» **Deliver disease-carrying nanobots to a downed target (*sickened-3*)**

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CHAPTER 5

//JOBS BULLETIN

Adventures in Tokyo 20XX

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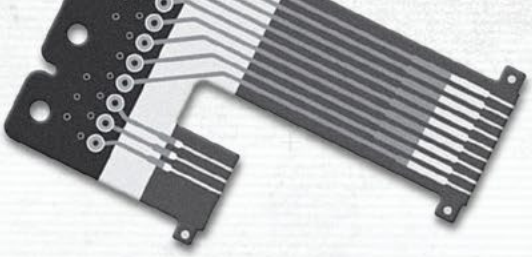
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ENTER THE ANTHILL

Get in, get out, don't get drawn into the dream



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BACKGROUND

This scenario is a "classic" Tokoyo (page 210) job, about secret assimilations and fantasy dreamworlds. The crew is sent to retrieve Dr. Haraguchi Sumire, a brilliant neural programmer, who was recruited into the Tokoyo dream cult.

Just before she began to suspect something's off she was "fast tracked" to full membership, since Tokoyo found a use for her expertise in Harnessing. She was brought into an **Anthill** in order to be assimilated into the hivemind.

The crew must infiltrate the **Sugi Sleep Clinic**, which is the front for the Anthill. On the surface, this location is a quiet and welcoming wellness facility, but much like with every anthill, there's a lot more going on underground.

JOB BRIEFING

Oyama Mental Processing is an up-and-coming tech company in the Megacity with a specialization in Harnessing. Like many Tokyo tech companies, they contracted with **Tokoyo Consultants**, a trusted business-to-business provider, to help improve their networking efficiency.

While the work went well, Oyama became suspicious afterwards because one of their top researchers, **Dr. Haraguchi Sumire**, soon left the company to join Tokoyo. She did so unexpectedly and drastically, severing all connections with friends and family.

Dr. Haraguchi was tracked down to **Sugi Sleep Clinic**, a Tokoyo establishment; she hasn't been seen leaving. Whether this is a case of espionage or kidnapping, Oyama isn't sure. In any case, they need her back alive, but should she resist, her expertise mustn't be allowed to fall into a competitor's hand. As the investigators on the scene, you're in charge of identifying Tokoyo's intentions with Dr. Haraguchi, and act accordingly.

HOOKS

- Oyama Mental Processing hires the crew to track down Dr. Haraguchi, as presented in the Job Briefing.
- Dr. Haraguchi's uncle and surrogate father, Haraguchi Ryo, is also concerned about her. He has little money to offer, but a strong emotional appeal. He is a retired accountant, who can be tied to any crew member: as a neighbor, a black books accountant, or a mahjong partner.
- One of the crew members lost a friend to the cult. Perhaps it's someone they thought was dead or someone they didn't realize had been inducted, until they suddenly saw them a few days ago around the Sugi Sleep Clinic. This led to the PC investigating, and soon a fellow investigator from Oyama made contact and asked to hire the crew. Now the PC has two reasons to infiltrate the Anthill, and to enter the dreamscape (see Kidnapping From Paradise, page 246).

LAYOUT

- Above Ground: Sugi Sleep Clinic
  - » Grounds And Façade
  - » Outer Ring
  - » Inner Ring
  - » Zen Garden Courtyard
  - » Clinic Cyberspace
- Below Ground: The Chambers
  - » Harnessing Chamber
  - » Drone Nest
  - » Cold Storage Chambers

ITINERARY

- Kidnapping From Paradise
  - » Connecting to Tokoyo
  - » Inside the Dream
  - » Waking Up
  - » System Defenses

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SECURITY AT THE ANTHILL

Tokoyo does not consider the crew a threat, nor is it especially concerned about the happenings in this Anthill. With the first Decree (protect the hivemind) thus being satisfied, all personnel, security included, defer to the second Decree (improve the hivemind).

The more the crew prove themselves capable, the more the hivemind is interested in absorbing them – the greatest risk for the crew in this job is being forcibly connected to a VR heaven.

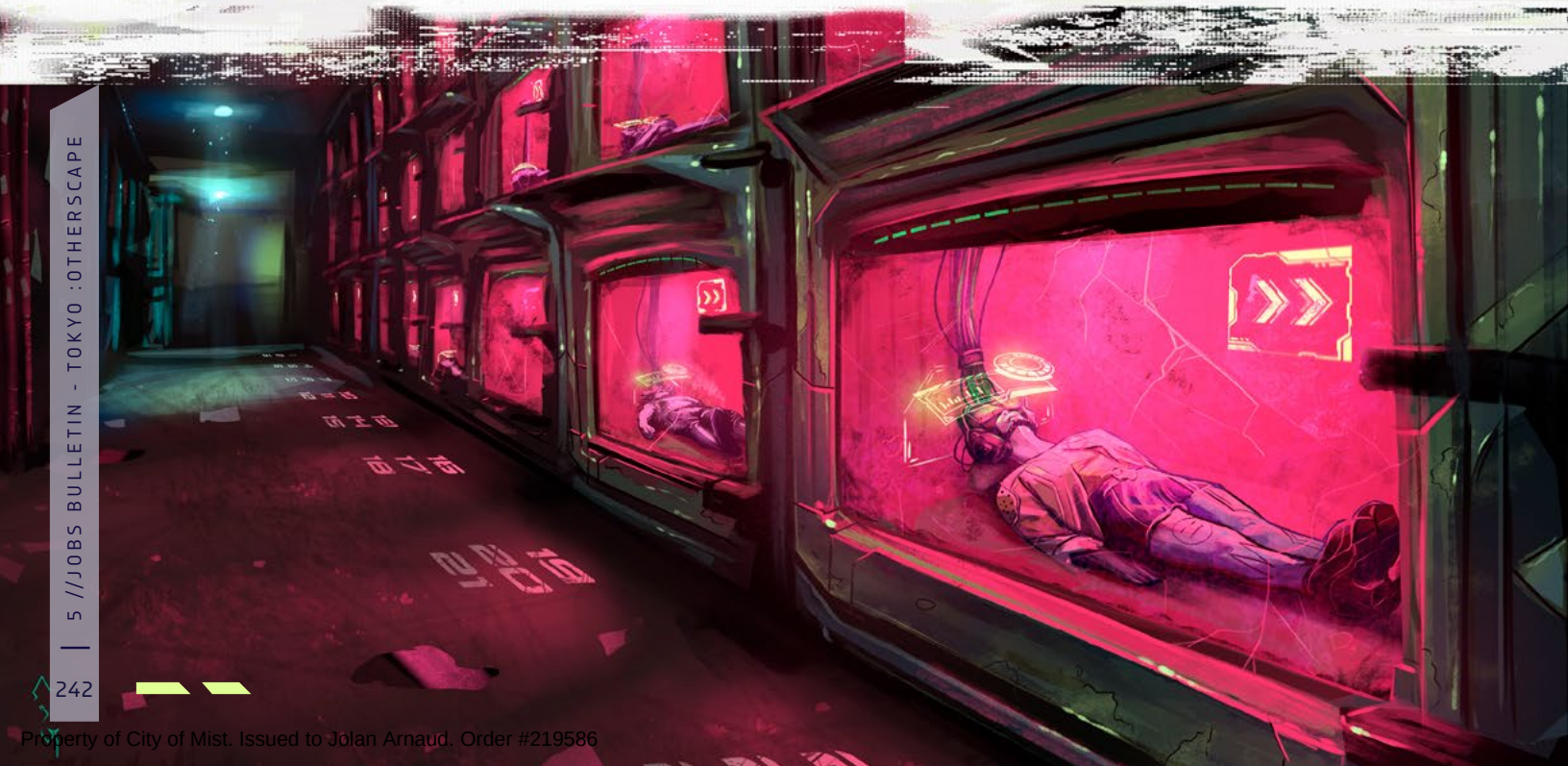
Sneaking around is difficult due to *constant signature tracking*, sensors that track the faint electromagnetic fields emitted by cyberware and most high-tech gadgets, but there are no security cameras around. In all areas above ground, triggering an alarm will call **Security Guards** (*Metro:Otherspace*, page 305) with Scale 1. Security is staffed by members of the cult and at least one in every group has the **Ari** Power Set (page 218).

If the crew turn violent, the guards sink into the hivemind and lose their identity, as the Decree takes control. They use special tasers which inflict *stun-4* on targets without cyberware, or *enter-the-dreamscape-3* on targets with cyberware. This status connects the PC's consciousness with the dreamscape, sending them deeper into the Tokoyo dream. At tier 5, the character is trapped in the dreamscape, see Kidnapping from Paradise (page 246) for more details. Characters without any cyberware are effectively immune to being connected, and therefore security instead attempts to restrain them and take them to the Dreampod Chambers (Inner Ring, page 244).

Defeating or even killing the guards does not raise the alarm any further, and instead some of the non-combatant staff go full hivemind (*harm:1* with *hivemind synchronization*), and begin searching for the crew, armed with the same tasers. Tokoyo can call up a near infinite number of replacement cultists (same as non-combatant staff, but with various Power Sets) and will do so as long as the crew is in the above ground areas. The alarm can be shut down from the Clinic Cyberspace (page 244), at which point all of the attackers immediately lose interest in the crew. It takes them a few moments to regain their identity, by which time the crew can make their escape from the scene.

Dealing considerable damage to equipment or people (to Tokoyo, these are the same things) will force the hivemind to materialize a **Kageari** (page 215) to identify and stop the attackers, in order to protect the hivemind.

Underground is a different matter entirely. The first Decree takes precedence here. Any detected attempt to interface with the equipment betrays the presence of an unauthorized user and immediately alerts the system, putting it on standby as a Consequence, **Escalating the Scene**. A second such event activates the **Security Trap-Jaw Ant-Bot** from the Drone Nest (page 245) which will come to investigate and destroy all opposition.



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ABOVE GROUND: SUGI SLEEP CLINIC

The Sugi Sleep Clinic is located near one of those train stops that are on the way to somewhere more important. Surrounded by a relatively well-maintained commercial neighborhood, the clinic's building sits in a cedar tree park enjoyed by the community, and is a seven-story complex that resembles a verdant volcanic crater – or anthill.

It's a stunning sight: the curved outer walls are green living walls, growing a hundred plant varieties, carefully cultivated to survive in the Megacity's climate. Patches of basalt and bulletproof glass peek through the greenery. The sign for the clinic is etched into marble steles beside the main entrance. Nearspace connection is clear and crisp, hinting that the place hides powerful hardware.

GROUNDS AND FAÇADE

There are two main entrances to the building: one for patients, facing south, and one for staff facing north. There are also several emergency exits, well-hidden and sealed under the living walls. It is also possible to enter through the hole at the top of the building (Zen Garden Courtyard, page 244).

WALKING IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOORS

The clinic does not take walk-ins. At the patient entrance, a pleasant but stern android assistant explains that a referral from a doctor is required. The staff entrance is locked with a digital key. Security teams at both entrances will only allow their staff and patients in. Referrals are sent to the Outer Ring (page 244) with no guard escort.

Alternatively, an **Akinosuke Recruiter** (page 213) can add your name to the cult's recruitment list, but this requires chasing one down in a nightclub and having them believe you're convinced by their rhetoric (at the risk of *actually* becoming convinced). Each security team has one Ari guard who always knows who is on the recruitment list, updated via their connection to Tokoyo. Those marked for recruitment are escorted by the guards to the Inner Ring (page 244).

BREAKING IN VIA OTHER WAYS

Locating the emergency exits from outside requires some reconnaissance. Each exit is a *one-way steel door* covered with *overgrowth* which hampers their discovery, and rigged with an *alarm system* that must be disabled, or risk setting off a general alarm throughout the building.

There are no security cameras on the outside, which might seem strange, until the final layer of protections is revealed. The living walls are crawling with **hen'i ants**, genetically-modified Japanese carpenter ants that have been created by Tokoyo and also Touched by it. Trying to enter via an emergency exit, or climbing the outer walls, might damage the pheromone trails hidden in the greenery, attracting the ants. They can get undetected into armor and equipment through tiny openings, chewing through wires and circuitry, or annoying with venomous stings.

HEN'I ANTS

TAGS & STATUSES

The ants cover their territory with magic-tinged *pheromone trails*, which are sensitive to people and to Mythos powers and interactions. This tag hinders stealth attempts; if the action generates Consequences, use it to present the ants to the scene.

LIMITS

DISPERSE OR DESTROY 1 **SCARE –**

TAGS & STATUSES

pheromone trails, *stealthy-2*, Scale 2

SPECIALS

UNDETECTABLE SABOTAGE: After the Hen'i Ants are defeated, but before the end of the session, the MC can give one PC who fought them *sabotaged-tech-2* or *allergic-reaction-2* as an interjection, or burn a relevant tag.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Crawl onto an object or person*
- » **Attack with a venomous sting (*burning-pain-1* or *allergic-reaction-2*)**
- » **Damage circuitry or wiring with bites and formic acid (*sabotaged-tech-1* or burn a tag)**

» **Attract other Hen'i Ants (increase Scale by 1)**

» **A weapon or app backfires due to the ants chewing through circuitry or jamming mechanisms (the PC inflicts a status intended for the ants on themselves or an ally)**

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OUTER RING

The Outer Ring is the part of the building that hugs the outer walls over the first three floors, separated from the Inner Ring by the main corridor which forms a dividing circle between them.

This is where normal sleep clinic operations occur. Patients who are referred for sleep disorders undergo a sleep study in one of the many labs, which resemble hotel rooms. Doctors, nurses, and staff also have their offices and break rooms throughout the Outer Ring. Several of the psychologists are **Source Worshipers** (spirit variant, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 203) with the **Ari** Power Set (page 218), who analyze patient files and try to recruit those who are healthy and open to the cult of the Dream.

Several elements of the construction here indicate that there's some kind of vast complex underground, such as pipes and network junctions leading downwards. A crew who sneaks into a private office can discover references to chambers on the -1 level. All signs point to the Inner Ring as the access point to that secret facility.

There are no clues regarding Dr. Haraguchi Sumire in the Outer Ring, no one seems to remember her and no documentation refers to her, forcing the crew to head deeper.

INNER RING

The Inner Ring takes up the center of the Anthill. This section of the building, which is narrow and seven-stories tall, is separated from the Outer Ring by the main corridor. Inside the ring is the Zen Garden Courtyard. The Inner Ring rooms hold special sleep technologies and long-term sleep rooms for unique therapies, as well as psychological assessment offices. Spa services dominate the ground floor.

Entering the Inner Ring from the Outer Ring requires bypassing a **Security System** (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 319) that protects all doors and windows (it can also be shut down from the Clinic Cyberspace, page 244). It's easier to get in from the Zen Garden, as explained under its entry.

The Inner Ring offers two ways to reach the underground Harnessing Chamber (page 245).

A security office holds an elevator that leads down, hidden behind a shifting wall. The elevator can only be activated by a cultist sending a signal via their implant to the hivemind. The signal can't be fabricated, but the doors to the elevator shaft can be opened using maintenance priorities from the Clinic Cyberspace. Brute force can also provide access to the shaft, with the risk of attracting attention.

Patients are brought below ground another way. On the second floor there are four special rooms, called the Dreampod Chambers. Here the patient is sealed within a sophisticated pod, which puts them into *deep-sleep-5* using electromagnetic emitters. Once the sensors detect a state of deep sleep, a secret opening in the floor sends the dreampod below. The crew can ride the pods to travel below if they discover how the system works, and could potentially fool the system with fake biodata to avoid sending one of their own into dreamland. Brute force can also open the delivery tubes, but opening the Harnessing Chamber doors without a pod going through automatically puts the below ground security system into standby (see Security At The Anthill, page 242).

Searching for leads on Dr. Haraguchi Sumire in the Inner Ring can reveal printed documents in one of the psychological assessment suites, indicating she was tested and sent to "priority treatment" in the Dreampod Chambers.

ZEN GARDEN COURTYARD

At the center of the building there's a round courtyard, open to the sky. Huge windows of the surrounding Inner Ring overlook the zen garden below, dominated by a single, giant cedar tree in the middle. The garden is part of the clinic's holistic sleep therapy approach, so the only security on the doors are keyed wristbands for staff and patients (*keyed entry*). No guards are posted here, but the garden is in such a central position in the building, that it's almost always under *constant observation* by a patient from a window, or nurses and patients enjoying the tranquility of the courtyard, making it difficult to avoid being seen.

CLINIC CYBERSPACE

The Anthill server sits inside the mind of a Harnessed sleeper in the Cold Storage Chambers (page 246). **Akechi Sandaiji** is a bitter ex-merc who used to be part of the same line of work as the crew before he joined the Dream cult in search of a new life. Tokoyo found a use for his heightened alertness and combat skills by making him into a secure server. With his ever-vigilant presence, there's little need to invest resources in further security measures, meaning the clinic's cyberspace can run itself quickly and efficiently.

The Domain appears as a mirrored but digitized version of the clinic, with data packets streaming like ants everywhere. Accessing and modifying normal operations of the clinic (including control of all doors) is simple enough for a skilled hacker – almost too simple. In truth, Sandaiji

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constantly-monitors-all-systems-4, as he *is* the ants crawling around. Any change to their patterns can be noticed by him as a Consequence.

If an intruder is detected, the ants crawl over their avatar and into their mind, dealing *enter-the-dreamscape-3*. Sandaiji is too far gone to manifest himself, but as a creepy Threat you might present a ghostly image of him, mumbling to himself about how these intruders remind him of himself and how they mustn't let themselves fall too far into the dream... as there's no coming back.

There's no *crash* Limit to the server – it keeps repairing itself. In every Establish, have the ants regroup as a Threat, removing two *crash* tiers as a Consequence if unaddressed. The crew is not here to take the Domain down, only to gather a few details and maybe manage to subvert the alarm before logging out. Use this to give the sense Sandaiji – and by proxy, Tokoyo – simply cannot be matched in cyberspace.

Snooping around in the documentation for Dr. Haraguchi reveals she was sent down to storage, to "join the Dream", through the Dreampod Chambers. Also available are full building schematics, including the elevator and dreampod tunnels that connect to the hidden chambers below. Attempting to access the complex underground through cyberspace reveals it's a completely different Domain, with an unhackable crypto gate. That's Tokoyo's domain, and no one can simply enter it.

BELOW GROUND: THE CHAMBERS

The park where the Anthill is located has underground cisterns and aqueducts, originally built to direct water and prevent flooding. Due to climate change, these water sources have long ago dried up and were forgotten by city officials.

Tokoyo built the Sugi Sleep Clinic at this location specifically to take advantage of the forgotten spaces, as a ready-made base of operations. A major tunnel runs under the very center of the clinic, with several smaller tunnels branching off to cisterns designed to hold floodwaters, now being used to store people.

The cyberspace Domain of the chambers is controlled directly by Tokoyo. It is practically impossible to defeat or outsmart the hivemind in cyberspace, and the point can be made by placing a *crypto-god-complexity-5* status on the Domain, affecting all hacking moves. An attempt to reduce this status immediately triggers the alarm and requires an immense amount of computational power to even attempt.

HARNESSING CHAMBER

Located directly below the Dreampod Chambers in the Inner Ring, this chamber is full of surgical beds and equipment. It is here that Tokoyo fits new hive members with special neuro-link helmets that allows them to fully integrate into the cult's dreamscape. Unlike normal Harnessing, these helmets are designed to keep a long-term and extremely thorough connection. New hive members are surgically fitted with the implants in this chamber before being moved to the Cold Storage Chambers for the implants to equilibrate over several weeks.

Snooping around in this area can lead to plenty of information on Tokoyo's operation and the nature of the Harnessing technology it uses, assuming the crew manages to make sense of the *perplexing design* of devices that were created by the alien mind of an AI. This is where they could learn the true nature of Tokoyo and get a glimpse of its scale and ambitions – and perhaps its Decrees as well, if that serves your series. At the very least, they should realize people inside the Dream experience a subjective passage of time.

Taking anything is risky, as every piece of tech is *chipped and tracked*, and removing a piece from this room alerts the hen'i ants from the adjacent Drone Nest, as well as the Security Guards above. If the PCs do manage to get away with some tech undetected, see the Tokoyo Catalog (page 219), especially the Lasius RealDream High Speed Harnessing Link.

A great success on a quick outcome or a **Discover** can be used to gain directions to the Harnessing pods of people held within this facility, including Dr. Haraguchi, in the Cold Storage Chambers.

DRONE NEST

Near the Harnessing Chamber is a single, cramped chamber providing access to the nest of the hen'i ant. Hive members rarely have to enter this space so the ceiling is low and the place is packed in tightly with food and water supplies for the ants, and not much lighting. Quiet investigation does not disturb the ants, though outright attacks would alert all of the hen'i ants at once and they'll swarm the area.

In the back is a Security Trap-Jaw Ant-Bot (see page 248) which remains powered down for anything but a major threat. It will awaken, though, should the crew follow through on their Kidnapping from Paradise (page 246) or set off the alarm.

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COLD STORAGE CHAMBERS

These half-dozen rooms are where hive members are "stored" while their bodies and brains adjust to the Tokoyo Harnessing pods or if their minds are needed for processing. The tight, coffin-like pods tend to their biological needs, connecting through tubes and syringes that have a slick but inhumane design, unappealing and insectile.

Akechi Sandaiji (Clinic Cyberspace, page 244) is stored here, as well as Dr. Haraguchi, see below.

More clues about Tokoyo can be gathered here, but an attempt to dismantle or analyze a pod is bound to end in failure. This is some of Tokoyo's most important and robust work, and special equipment and training is required to even begin to handle any of it. The people themselves are dispensable though, and if Tokoyo sees a need, it can open all the pods and have the barely-conscious humans, driven mostly by their reptilian brain, suddenly erupt into a vicious mob. They attack anyone Tokoyo identifies as a potential threat (*hurt-or-subdue:2*, *mindlessly-aggressive-2*, Scale 2, Threat: *Crowd around an intruder*, Consequence: **Grab, kick and punch wildly (***bruised-2***)**).

Opening the chambers also creates a *thick cold mist* from the spread of chilled air.

DR. HARAGUCHI

In one of the Cold Storage Chambers is **Dr. Haraguchi Sumire**. In her forties, with obvious cyber augs to help with failing eyesight, Dr. Haraguchi is staring blankly from within the pod she is encased in.

Any PC who gathered some information about this technology, or who has expert understanding of VR, can tell that Dr. Haraguchi is still in the early stages of assimilation and her mind is still her own. She can disconnect if she chooses to, and the pod will eject her. Therefore it is possible to sever Dr. Haraguchi's connection to the hivemind carefully from within, by entering the dreamscape and escorting her outside. This way is safer for the doctor, but riskier for the crew; it's explained under Kidnapping from Paradise (page 246).

The pod can also be deactivated with an action, but it has a *perplexing design* and is connected to an *alarm system*. It can also be smashed, which automatically activates the alarm and calls the Security Trap-Jaw Ant-Bot from the Drone Nest. In either case, the doctor will have to be forcibly removed from the neural link to disconnect her from the Tokoyo dreamscape, and any PC with some understanding in cyberware can tell that this would be devastating to her psyche. What they might not be aware of, though, is that Dr. Haraguchi will also be subject to the psychological shock of being removed from paradise. She takes *dissociated-5* for being disconnected, and also *dream-longing-5* for leaving the peaceful land she spent so many subjective years in, rendering her incapable of doing anything but staring blankly and mumbling to herself, meaning the crew members will have to carry her out, or lead her slowly by hand.

KIDNAPPING FROM PARADISE

Though she was only flagged as missing several days ago by her employer, Dr. Haraguchi's psyche has spent a decade of subjective time within the dreamscape. She's accustomed to her current world and barely remembers the "real" one, and therefore sees no reason to leave.

CONNECTING TO TOKOYO

The crew can connect to the VR dreamscape of Tokoyo in one of several ways.

Characters who took the status *enter-the-dreamscape-5* are already there. Easy! In fact, in the time the rest of the crew took to infiltrate the underground chambers, the trapped PCs have already spent several *weeks* in this simulation of an idyllic, old-fashioned world, waiting for their friends to rescue them. Each such PC takes one of the following statuses of their choice: *frustrated-4*, *liking-it-here-4*, or *a-bit-rusty-4*; this can be mitigated as normal.

Connecting to the dream via AR or simple screens provides some measure of protection from the hivemind, but it's very difficult to compensate for the time difference. Characters who are not Harnessed have a *lag-3* status which cannot be reduced and affects every action within the dreamscape. However, they can mitigate normally against the digital agents within.

PCs that choose to Harness into the dreamscape with their own gear can find relays to connect throughout the Cold Storage Chambers. They experience *lag-1* for not using the special headgear. They also gain the story tag *too real* which cannot be burned or removed, and hinders mitigation rolls inside the dreamscape.

Finally, PCs can enter one of the empty pods and engage directly with the system. They experience no lag, but while inside the dream they have the story tags *too real* and *feels*

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right at home which cannot be burned or removed, and hinder mitigation rolls inside the dreamscape. In addition, because they are not using the special Tokoyo headgear (which requires a prolonged and delicate operation in order to be fitted), they are in danger of suffering *long-term-brain-damage-1* if they stay inside the dream for longer than half an hour or so.

INSIDE THE DREAM

The crew all appear in the same place (unless you want them to get *lost-4* and chase down each other's connection). It's a section of the Tokoyo dreamscape resembling a small village in the shadow of a beautiful mountain. The weather is nice, the smell of spring flowers is in the air, a soft breeze makes the wind chimes dance and jiggle. The village is hosting a music festival, and the sounds are rich and inviting.

Dr. Haraguchi is participating in the music festival, and *feels-right-at-home-4*. Originally, she didn't want to join this dreamscape, but that was many years ago, and in that time she got so accustomed to the place that she even forgot it's a VR realm. She became a potter and is living a full life, although she isn't aware that parts of her mind are being selectively removed over time. She is still *proud of her academic achievements* and has *love for her friends and family outside*, which the crew can build on if they remind her of her previous life.

Many of the people in the village are fellow dreamers, who have spent many years here, but some are NPC-like entities emulated by Tokoyo. Taking action to further examine the dreamers can reveal that aspects of their personalities are simply missing and they lost many social skills. A hacker can trace their signals to realize these people are literally losing their minds, as more and more of the brain is absorbed into the collective consciousness.

WAKING UP

Logging out is a simple matter, as it only requires one to call up a torii gate which appears at the edge of the village, and walk through it. A person can even be pushed through the gate, but this isn't different from forcibly disconnecting them, inflicting *dissociated-5*. Also, unless the person was first convinced they should return to the physical world, they also take *dream-longing-5*.

If Dr. Haraguchi is convinced to walk out, she still takes *dream-longing-3* when she wakes up and it'll be several months of therapy before she can acclimate fully back to the real world.

A PC with an *enter-the-dreamscape-5* status cannot call up a torii gate, as they are being forcibly kept unconscious. Should they jump through someone else's gate they can attempt to mitigate the *dissociated* status. Their bodies are inside one of the pods in the Cold Storage Chambers, and the pods open and release them once they are out of the dream.

SYSTEM DEFENSES

If the crew draws attention, the other dreamers in the server will react with anger and fear to one of their members being removed from this paradise. Use the **Tokoyo Villager Mob** Challenge, below.

The cultists are not particularly dangerous, but can pose a significant delay while the system calls for further backup, mainly due to their willingness to put themselves in danger in order to uphold Decree One.

When they set out to rescue a dreamer, they do not care if that person is leaving willingly or not. As they are pulling them into the village they give the dreamer *out-of-reach*, which hinders all attempts by PCs to take them out of the dream.

You can also introduce one or more Ari Code Swarms (page 216) as a Consequence separately from the crowd, especially after the crew calls up a torii gate.

TOKOYO VILLAGER MOB

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 **SCARE AWAY 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

zealous-2, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Crowd around an intruder or a friend in need*
- » **Grab, kick and punch wildly, or strike with rakes, hoes, and carpentry tools (*bruised-2*, and *out-of-reach-2* to a dreamer in the PC's hands)**
- » **Swarm from the village towards the commotion (increase Scale by 1, to a maximum of 3)**

› *Regroup while ghostly ants materialize around them*
- » **Gain a boost or skill needed in the fight as Tokoyo upgrades their avatars (gain a tier-2 status such as *fast-2* or a story tag such as *bo-fighting*)**
- » **The ants materialize into an Ari swarm (Present a New Challenge: Ari Code Swarm, page 216)**

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For a final showdown, after the crew escape the dreamworld, you can activate the Security Trap-Jaw Ant-Bot as the PCs get on their feet and start to make their way out. The robot will chase them throughout the Anthill, but not into the streets.

SECURITY TRAP-JAW ANT-BOT

TAGS & STATUSES

This hulking robot unfolds from its compact storage setting into a design based on trap-jaw ants. Massive mandibles stick out from the side like scissor blades, snapping shut with incredible speed and force. The Ant-Bot can use this force to tear through flesh and armor, to throw an enemy around or even to launch the robot itself into the air.

LIMITS

WRECK 4	SHUTDOWN 4	TAKE OVER –	OUTRUN 5

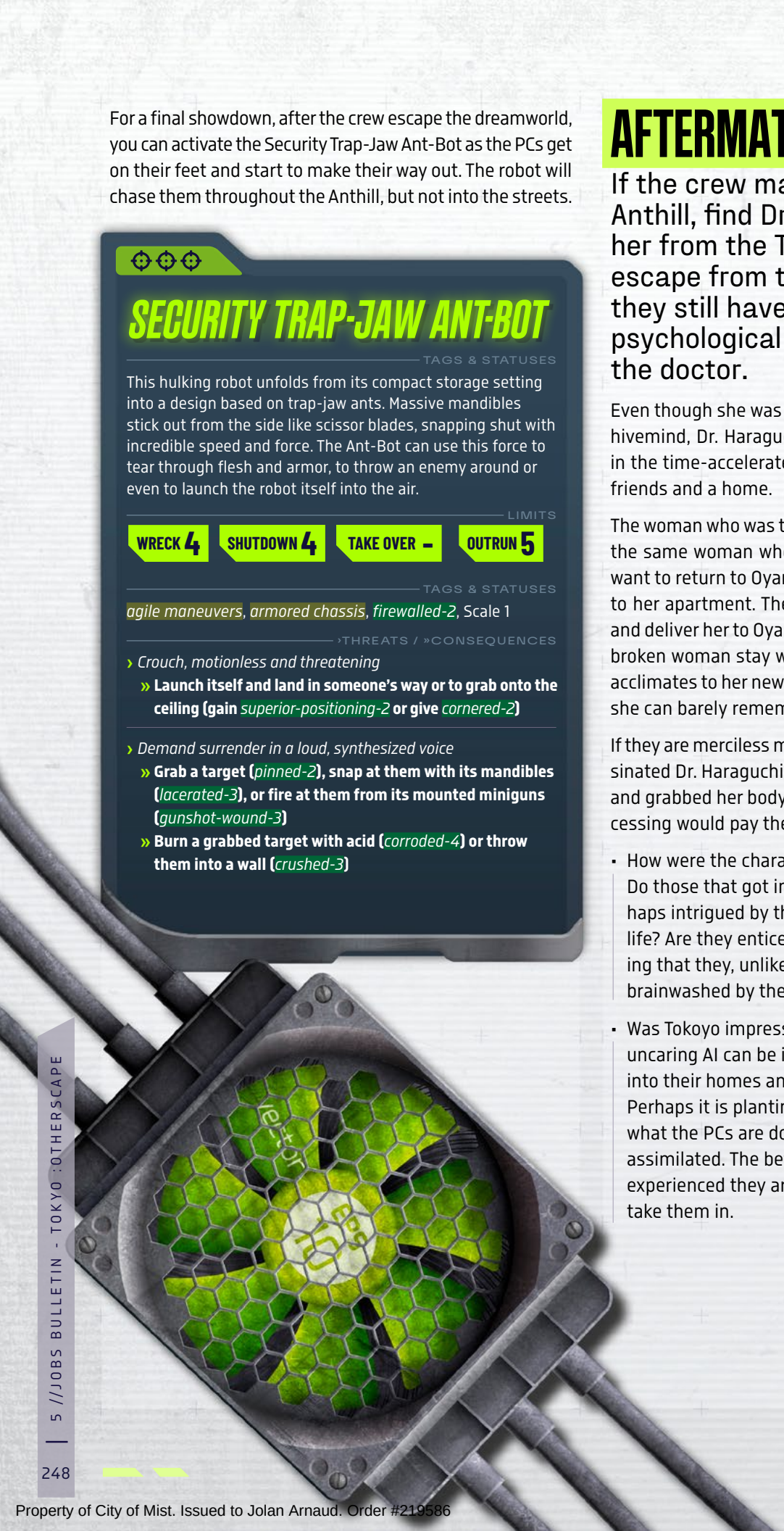
TAGS & STATUSES

agile maneuvers, *armored chassis*, *firewalled-2*, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Crouch, motionless and threatening*
  » **Launch itself and land in someone's way or to grab onto the ceiling (gain *superior-positioning-2* or give *cornered-2*)**

› *Demand surrender in a loud, synthesized voice*
  » **Grab a target (*pinned-2*), snap at them with its mandibles (*lacerated-3*), or fire at them from its mounted miniguns (*gunshot-wound-3*)**
  » **Burn a grabbed target with acid (*corroded-4*) or throw them into a wall (*crushed-3*)**



AFTERMATH

If the crew manages to infiltrate the Anthill, find Dr. Haraguchi, remove her from the Tokoyo server, and escape from the sleep clinic facility, they still have to deal with the psychological fallout experienced by the doctor.

Even though she was an unwilling initiate into the Tokoyo hivemind, Dr. Haraguchi has experienced decades of life in the time-accelerated server. She built a life there with friends and a home.

The woman who was taken by Tokoyo a few days ago is not the same woman who came out. Dr. Haraguchi does not want to return to Oyama Mental Processing, and not even to her apartment. The crew can either sedate the doctor and deliver her to Oyama... or try to console her and let the broken woman stay with them for a few weeks while she acclimates to her new-old life and reconnects with friends she can barely remember.

If they are merciless mercenaries, perhaps the crew assassinated Dr. Haraguchi for refusing to exit the dreamscape and grabbed her body on the way out. Oyama Mental Processing would pay them either way.

- How were the characters shaped by this experience? Do those that got into the dreamscape become perhaps intrigued by the prospect of living a full, fulfilling life? Are they enticed to know more, possibly believing that they, unlike all of those other fools, won't be brainwashed by the cult?
- Was Tokoyo impressed by the crew, as far as an uncaring AI can be impressed? Does it send tiny ants into their homes and VR domains, to spy on them? Perhaps it is planting tracking devices in order to see what the PCs are doing, and if they are worthy of being assimilated. The better they become and the more experienced they are, the more Tokoyo would want to take them in.

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BITING THE BULLET

A cyberspace train heist, derailed



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BACKGROUND

Biting the Bullet is a VR train heist scenario that can be run from either direction: the crew could either be defending the valuable data on the train from being stolen, or carry out the heist themselves. It's up to the MC to decide how to use and present the scenario.

The cyberspace bullet train is called the **Genbi Dangansen**, belonging to the data transport fleet of the Dangansen Group.

THE GREAT DATASTREAM ROBBERY

Maboroshi Labs is a small company that developed a program to create genetically-combined hybrid creatures using an Esoteric Source, carvings copied from a temple wall. They hoped that the power of the **baku** (chimerical creatures in Japanese legend that eat bad dreams) will help stabilize their experiment where science fell short. The scientists managed to create living baku but unfortunately, their program kept yielding unstable results. In legend, the baku can turn on their summoners if called too often but these failed hybrids were violent from the start.

Recently Maraboshi decided to unload the entire project to the larger **Chrysanthemum Biosciences**, a biotechnology corporation who shares a zaibatsu with them. Scientists at Chrysanthemum think they can fix the problems in the chimeric process – or perhaps they just want violent chimeras; Chrysanthemum has somewhat of a mercenary reputation. First, though, a whole lot of data needs to be transferred from the Maboroshi servers to Chrysanthemum.

Enter Dangansen, and their top-of-the-line cyberspace "bullet train" secure data transfer service. Whether the PCs attack the train or protect it, they will have to take into account the train's Intrusion Countermeasures: encrypted cars, a unique **vista wrap** mechanism (page 251) that changes the VR environment around the train, and the automated **Karakuri Attendants** security programs (page 254).

JOB BRIEFING

"The **Dangansen Group** sets the standard for business-to-business data transfer protocols. In this era of unprecedented data theft and corruption, our Dangansen ("bullet line") presents the best in fast and secure transmissions, a framework of encryption and counter-intrusion measures traveling along hidden tracks in cyberspace.

For especially sensitive data packets, we offer an upgraded service which includes additional programs and Harnessed guards. You can rest assured that your precious data is safe and secure on our bullet trains."

Right. This is where *you* come in.

The encrypted Maboroshi Labs data is represented on the train as artwork, a set of nine heavy paintings. Unlike most heists, though, the paydata is not just loot to be protected or stolen – it's also a danger unto itself. Over the course of the train ride, the Mythos power in the data will be degrading the encryption, the compressed data will leak out, and at a dramatically appropriate moment digital versions of the **Failed Baku Hybrids** (page 255) will emerge and start to hunt and attack defenders and thieves alike.

The PC crew will also face a rival crew in the form of the **Nightclouders** (page 254), employees of Maboroshi Labs who worship the Baku Mythos. If the PCs are pulling the heist, the Nightclouders are guarding the train; if the PC's are the protectors, the Nightclouders are pulling the heist.

HOOKS

- **As defenders:** The crew is hired by Chrysanthemum as security consultants tasked with ensuring delivery. They are provided with the itinerary and some basic support (see Defending Crew Itinerary, page 256) and half payment upfront – the other half with the safe arrival of *all* items at the Chrysanthemum station.
- **As attackers:** The crew is hired by a rival third company looking to steal the data for themselves. They can provide the crew with only a few details (see Attacking Crew Itinerary, page 260), and will pay for each art piece the crew manages to steal. For a more intense scenario, the company needs the theft go unnoticed, requiring the crew to replace the stolen art pieces with forgeries and keep the entire operation covert.

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- **As attackers:** The crew is interested in obtaining the Hybrid Baku data for their own reasons. Perhaps they want to have access to the Baku Source – one of them may be compelled to free the Baku, banish it, or study it – or maybe they are raising an army for some other job or future military clash. Conversely, the goal of the heist could be to prevent anyone from gaining the power of the Baku Hybrids, for example, if Chrysanthemum is expected to use them against a community for which the crew is responsible.

LAYOUT

- Genbi Dangansen
  - » Outside the Train: The Vista Wraps
  - » The Hull
  - » First Car: Karakuri Attendant Storage
  - » Second Car: Passenger Seats
  - » Third Car: Vista Wrap Generator
  - » Fourth Car: Art Gallery
- Maboroshi Station
- Dangan Central
- Chrysanthemum Station

TRAIN ITINERARY

The Genbi Dangansen instance carrying the baku hybrid data is traveling from the Maboroshi corporate server to the Chrysanthemum corporate server, using encrypted Dangansen networking. Its only midway stop is at the Dangan Central hub server, where its contents are scanned and verified. In cyberspace, this is represented as an origin train station, a central station, and a destination station, with stretches of railway in between.

- Maboroshi Station (Origin)
- The First Leg
- Dangan Central (Stop)
- The Second Leg
- Chrysanthemum Station (Destination)

REPLACE WITH YOUR OWN

You can easily change Maboroshi Labs and Chrysanthemum Biosciences to other corporations. If another biotech company in *Metro:Otherscape* or from this book (such as Soma Medical, page 192) already plays a central role in your story and you'd like to make it more personal for the PCs, all that needs to change is the names of the companies.

THE GENBI DANGANSEN

> The Genbi Dangansen is as beautiful as it is secured. Decorated with shiny golds and deep reds, with sophisticated ornaments along the edges of every roof and on every door, the bullet train is an impenetrable fortress in the guise of a piece of art.

Below are the descriptions of the four cars of the Genbi Dangansen and the IC deployed around it. The engine at the front is designed to optionally carry a Harnessed engineer, but the system is automated and none are currently on board. In terms of size, each car is Scale 1, the whole train is Scale 2, and the train together with its VR environs (the Vista Wraps) is Scale 3

OUTSIDE THE TRAIN: THE VISTA WRAPS

While the bullet train travels from station to station through cyberspace, it is protected by a program that projects around it a counter-intrusion VR environment ("vista wrap"). The program cycles through its five vistas to protect the train from various types of intrusion: an **Arctic Winter** vista, an **Entropy Storm** vista, a **Jungle** vista, a **Lava Field** vista, and a **Wild West** vista.

These wraps have different uses and purposes and the vista wrap can change to respond to different attackers, if they are detected. The vista starting to flicker and change is a Threat, followed by the Consequence of the vista switching, which the PCs can only avert if they already hacked into the Vista Wrap Generator in the third car (page 251).

Anyone inside the Genbi Dangansen is safe from the vista effects, even if there is an opening cut into the train's roof or walls. The vista wraps are switched off while docking in a station.

THE HULL

The outer shell of the train is a powerful encryption barrier, designed to direct access from cyberspace. It is decorated with a **protective decal** of natural motifs in gold paint: Flowering vines and branches cover the walls of the train and dragon spirits cover the doors. Once the train starts traveling, these motifs activate and start moving slowly in rhythmic patterns, looking for intruders to entangle.

Intruders – whether stealthy infiltrators or bold raiders – need to break through the train's *densely-tangled reinforced hull*, hindered by both status and tag. The tier of the status equals the ordinal number of the car: the tangle is lightest in the first car, the Karakuri Attendant Storage (*densely-tangled-1*) and becomes denser the farther back you go, reaching its maximum encryption power in the fourth car, the Art Gallery Car (*densely-tangled-4*).

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Breaking through the hull or creating a person-sized hole in the hull is an action with a quick outcome. **Weaken** can be used to remove the tangle status, making it easier to then break in. As a Consequence, the decal floral motifs come to life around anyone trying to cut through them, and physically *entangle* the intruders (at the same tier of *densely-tangled*). The third and fourth car have dragon spirit motifs on the outside doors, which can awaken and snap at intruders (*wounded* at the same tier of *densely-tangled*).

FIRST CAR: KARAKURI ATTENDANT STORAGE

This is the first car behind the engine. The car has no outside doors and one small window, barely enough to squeeze through if opened. Inside, in the dark, two rows of inactive, cloth-covered Karakuri Attendants hang from the ceiling along the walls; these are VR constructs in standby mode. Along the left side wall there are a few workstations used to provide servicing and maintenance to the Attendants. The active Attendants only enter this car in response to a security threat.

The car is *often overlooked*, and is packed full of *covered Attendants* and *maintenance workstations* that can provide hiding places and access to of the Attendants' code.

When there is a need for an additional Attendant somewhere in the train, one of them will wake up in this car with a mechanical whirr (Threat) before beginning to do as instructed by the system (Consequence: Present a New Challenge: Karakuri Attendant).

SECOND CAR: PASSENGER SEATS

This car is a first-class passenger car, with room for six passengers and their personal cargo. The Dangansen Group offers its clients the chance to Harness into the train and accompany their cargo on the trip in person.

In the attack scenario, the Nightclouders use this car as a guard post and keep three Nightclouders (Scale 1) here at all times. Stealthy PCs can learn their shift patterns and sneak through when they are on the move, or try to take them out in a quiet way. If a conflict erupts, one of the Nightclouders retreats to warn the others while the rest of them try to halt the advance of the PCs through the train for as long as possible.

In either scenario, there are probably a few Karakuri Attendants here (Scale 1), treating the defenders as first-class passengers to the point of compromising their alertness. Use their Threats and Consequences to represent that.

Besides the luxurious seats and the cargo racks, the car is fitted with an *environment controller*, capable of changing the interior decoration and design of the car, in essence a smaller and safer version of the vista wraps. Each of the seats also has a *privacy module*, allowing the seat and its contents to be blurred, camouflaged or spoofed. These devices are currently turned off; a skilled infiltrator can activate them and use them to their advantage.

VISTA WRAP	ENVIRONMENT DESCRIPTION AND THREAT	DESIGNED AGAINST	TAGS	CONSEQUENCES
Arctic Winter	White tracts, blowing snow and freezing temperatures.	Quick-moving infiltrators	*blinding blizzard*, *freezing cold*	**Ice grows rapidly on every exposed surface (*slippery-3*, *frostbite-3*, or *ice-encased-3*)**
Entropy Storm	Glowing clouds rain glimmering lines of code.	VR constructs and avatars	*buffeting winds*	**Corrupted code erodes digital entities (*glitched-4*)**
Jungle	Thick and impenetrable tropical foliage.	"Flying" infiltrators landing on or attaching to train, above or below	*thick canopy*, *insect swarms*	**A swarm of insects settles on an attacker (*distracted-3* or *unstable-3*), a vehicle crashes into the trees (*wrecked-3*)**
Lava Fields	Mountainside during a volcanic eruption.	Brute force attackers	*impenetrable ash cloud*	**Lava waves splash violently (*severe-burns-3* or burn two weapon and armor tags)**
Wild West	Open sun-baked desert or prairie.	Stealthy infiltrators	*blazing sunlight*, *nowhere to hide*	**Armed horseback enforcers open fire (*gunshot-wound-2*); sunlight burns off false credentials (burn a tag)**

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THIRD CARD: VISTA WRAP GENERATOR

This car is the most cramped, and is full of machinery and control stations lining up both walls, leaving a narrow path through the car. Large screens show the vista wraps in several versions – the current one as well as the other options that can be turned on from here. Dials and buttons can control the intensity and focus of the wraps, and someone who has hacked into the system from here can use them to direct the wraps for their benefit.

To gain this control, the user needs to max out *take-over:5* and gain superuser privileges. If a PC manages to do this, they can change the vista wraps and direct their effects on specific locations outside of the train. By default, the Dangansen Group does not allow defending security consultants (whether the Nightclouder or the PCs) to access this car; if they try, the Attendants will attempt to prevent them from entering, unless the Attendants have a more urgent task.

The car is crammed to the brim with *bulky machinery*, interfering with any kind of movement in or through the car. The screens, cabinets and machines hide many *nooks and crannies* that can serve as protected hiding spots, such as the ones the infiltrating Nightclouder scouts are looking for during The First Leg (see **Defending The First Leg**, page 256).

Karakuri Attendants pass through this car often. Use their Challenge profiles to present obstacles to PCs trying to sneak or fight their way through.

FOURTH CAR: ART GALLERY

Like the historical Genbi Shinkansen, the train is a mobile art gallery: the fourth and largest car is an elegant exhibition space, where precious pieces of artwork hang along the left side walls.

Nine *large* and *bulky* paintings are displayed here in a line, representing a highly-compressed payload housing immense amounts of data. They are all along the left side wall, while the right side one has large reinforced windows, showing the vista wraps at all times. In between, the wooden floor is open and spacious.

A group of Attendants (Scale 1) is here, and in the attack scenario, most of the Nightclouders (Scale 2) will be here as well, defending their cargo.

The floors here are *nightingale floors*, loose wooden boards that chirp gently when stepped on – not loud enough to ruin a gallery viewer's experience, definitely too loud for a sneaky thief trying to advance unnoticed.



The paintings' encryption is slowly degrading. When a fight starts in this car, in whichever scenario, you can introduce the Baku Hybrids as a dramatic wrench in the plans. See **Springing the Baku Hybrids at the Right Moment** (page 255) on when and how to introduce them.

DANGAN CENTRAL STATION

> All the myriad tracks of the Dangansen transmission network come together in Dangan Central, a VR space rendered as a busy and engaging train station with incoming and outgoing bullet trains. Platforms are filled with cargo representing data packets, and countless inspectors scan and verify each and every one. An announcement calls out an incoming bullet train and mechanized attendants move toward the track to run security checks. At another platform, a train is cleared and begins to zip away toward its final destination, with a booming sound.

A great many trains arrive at Dangan Central for data verification and virus-scanning, and every datastream has its own platform, separated from the rest. The many automated services, chief among them the Karakuri Attendants, are able to pass through the large sliding doors separating platforms with proper authorization codes. To everyone else, the doors are solid.

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ACTIVE PROGRAMS & USERS

KARAKURI ATTENDANTS

The Attendants are Dangansen agent subroutines that visually resemble karakuri puppets, mechanized Japanese automata from the 17th to 19th century, with gears hidden under porcelain faces and traditional but circuit-patterned garb. Their dainty appearance betrays their fragility, but their movements are decisive and deadly, with almost imperceptible shifts of their mechanisms. Every Karakuri Attendant has a unique appearance, and they're all expert gunslingers and archers, with excellent visual acuity.

There are about a dozen automatons active at any time, but the Genbi Dangansen can activate new ones if needed, releasing them from the Karakuri Attendant Storage car.

The Attendants are friendly towards the PCs if they are defending the train, or if they are infiltrating but have successfully disguised themselves. They are eager to serve refreshments and offer comfortable seats to rest in, which will likely still be an interference.

KARAKURI ATTENDANT

LIMITS

CRASH 2 **TAKE OVER 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

inhumanly quick, *alert-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Ask someone if they would like a cup of tea*
» **Get in the way of a PC with a refreshment (*blocked-2*)**

› *Fold open a joint or hidden compartment to reveal a gun muzzle or bow*
» **Fire its integrated gun (*gunshot-wound-2*) or bow (*bleeding-2*)**

› *Flicker from position to position as it keeps its distance, moving and dancing*
» **Perform a thorough search through a car (remove two tiers from stealth or hiding statuses), possibly finding their target (Escalate the situation)**
» **Disappear momentarily from field of vision (gain *stealthy-2*)**

› *Maneuver just in front of a PC*
» **Wrap someone in tight spring coils (*spring-bound-3*)**
» **Push a restrained intruder off the train or eject them from the station (*crash-5*)**

› *Stand still and ring a small bell from inside their chassis*
» **Summon more Karakuri Attendants (increase Scale by 1)**

NIGHTCLOUDERS

Whether attacking or defending, the Nightclouders appear in Maboroshi Labs corporate security detail avatars: sleek dark bodysuits with backlit slash motifs and Noh animal masks. Each Nightclouder wears a netsuke-style necklace depicting a chimerical baku that grants them powers. The Nightclouders want to see the Baku Mythos more fully realized, which they believe will give them even stronger control over nightmares.

NIGHTCLOUDERS

LIMITS

HURT (CRASH) 3 **BRIBE OR TURN –**

TAGS & STATUSES

heist gear or *defensive positions*, *zeal-2*, *stealthy-3*

SPECIALS

WREATHED IN NIGHTMARES: A PC who takes action against a Nightclouder at close proximity first takes *terrified-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Deftly rush an adversary with weapon drawn, their beastly mask betraying no emotion*
» **Swing an oversized machete (*slashed-3*) or fire a hunting rifle (*gunshot-wound-3*)**
» **Keep someone cornered with savage advances (*pinned-down-2*)**

› *Leap and hang on fixture, swinging away*
» **Tumble to a new location (*superior-position-2*)**
» **Disappear in a gap or a crevice (*stealthy-3* or Deny Them Something They Want)**
» **Swing by someone and snatch a useful tool (burn a tag)**

› *Scan their surrounding with beams of green light*
» **Notice a disturbance and examine it (remove two tiers of stealth or hiding statuses), possibly tracking down its source (Escalate the situation)**

› *Clutch their necklace with one hand and start conjuring a shimmering nightmare*
» **Conjure a momentary nightmare of a terrifying shadowy beast (*terrified-3*)**
» **Alter gravity in the train car so that everything falls to one side or the ceiling (*bruised-2* to anyone unprepared, and the train car gains *awkward angles*)**
» **Twist the space around the doors to neighboring cars, tying off the car from the rest of the train (Escalate the Situation)**

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FAILED BAKU HYBRIDS

These chimeric creatures are strange combinations of two or three different animals, forged together in a computer-generated simulation that is bleeding pixels at the edges. In legend, baku are eaters of bad dreams and only devour hopes and ambitions when called upon too often. These hybrids are failed experiments, however, and their appetites are stronger.

SPRINGING THE BAKU HYBRIDS AT THE RIGHT MOMENT

The job takes a sharp turn when the Failed Baku Hybrids break out of their compressed containers (the paintings) and begin their devouring rampage. This is a dramatic cinematic moment that might change the job from heist to survival horror.

FAILED BAKU HYBRID

TAGS & STATUSES

Eater of dreams hinders attempts to avoid the Hybrid's mental Consequences.

LIMITS

CRASH 3 **INTIMIDATE 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

eater of dreams, *monstrous*, *alert-2*, *ferocious-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A painting starts changing, rendering in and out of existence, alternatively showing swirls of color and nightmarish animal hybrid forms*
- » **Beasts composed of different animal parts materialize near the painting (Present a New Challenge: Failed Baku Hybrid or increase existing Baku Hybrid's Scale by 1)**

› *Sniff the air, looking for prey*
- » **Close in on its prey, drooling acidic saliva (remove two tiers of stealth or hiding statuses)**
- » **Corner its prey (*cornered-3*)**

› *Crouch low before pouncing*
- » **Maul, trample, skewer with tusks, or slash with claws (*injured-3*)**
- » **Devour the hopes and dreams of someone (burn an appropriate tag representing devotion, fortitude, or optimism, or any Mythos tag)**
- » **Shapeshift its head or body into a new animal, and activate its ability (pick or roll from the Baku Hybrid Powers table)**

› *Stare at someone's eyes and directly into their soul*
- » **Inflict nightmarish visions (*hallucinating-3*) or put to sleep (*drowsy-3*)**

The hybrids attack indiscriminately, and the crew, the Nightclouders, and the Attendants are all in danger. When introducing them, encourage the players to take in the new situation and adjust their tactics – running away, using the chaos to complete their original mission, cooperating with the Nightclouders to survive, and other previously unlikely outcomes can be considered and given a chance to succeed.

The best point to introduce the hybrids is when the actual theft of the paintings is underway, meaning in the gallery car, while the infiltrators already have their hands on some of the paintings. Have the hybrids appear and immediately attack whoever is handling the paintings, be it friend or foe.

If the PCs act exceptionally well as the defenders, the Nightclouders might not even make it to the gallery car. In that case, introduce the hybrids at a point in time where it would be the most inconvenient for the players. The hybrids' appearance should be a wrench in the players' plans and an opportunity for the Nightclouders.

BAKU HYBRID POWERS

TIER	HEAD ANIMALS
1	**Boar: Charge with tusks (*bleeding-3* and *knocked-down-2*)**
2	**Dog: Sniff out (gain *alert-3*) or bark for help (Present a New Challenge: Failed Baku Hybrid)**
3	**Elephant: Trumpet loudly (*deafened-3* to all nearby) or grab with trunk (*restrained-3*)**
4	**Mouse: Gain *keen hearing* and *night vision*.**
5	**Rhinoceros:** Increase its physical harm status Consequences by one tier.
6	**Sea Lion: Bark loudly to dispel magic (gain or give *warded-2*)**

TIER	BODY ANIMALS
1	**Bear: Pin someone to the ground (*restrained-3*)**
2	**Cow: Gain *tough hide*.**
3	**Deer: Gain *swift maneuvers* and *sure footing*.**
4	**Hare: Jump away and disappear for now (Deny Them Something They Want)**
5	**Monkey: Steal something and throw it away (burn a gear tag)**
6	**Tiger:** Inflict an additional *bleeding-2* whenever inflicting a status of physical harm.

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DEFENDING CREW ITINERARY

In this scenario, the crew is hired by Chrysanthemum as added security during the train ride and are tasked with defending the data. The Nightclouders are former employees of Maboroshi Labs, fired after they became too emotionally invested and possessive of the project.

They began worshiping the Baku Mythos and were discovered when they tried to take project data out of the company's labs. Now that their former employer is selling the project and moving the data, the Nightclouders see a second chance to get their hands on it.

THE NIGHTCLOUDER'S ATTACK PLAN

The Nightclouders' plan is to attack in force during The Second Leg. To prepare for that, they employ two clandestine measures ahead of time.

First, they sneak a few of their numbers on board during The First Leg under the cover of a distraction in the form of a VR monster attack. The scouts then make their way to the vista wrap generator car, preparing to take control of it before the main attack.

Second, while the train stops at Dangan Central, a member of the Nightclouders will sneak on board disguised as a Karakuri Attendant, and will scope out the active defensive measures present – i.e., the crew. This hacker will try to disrupt the crew's abilities directly before the main attack begins.

PREPARING FOR THE JOB

CHRYSANTHEMUM SUPPORT

Chrysanthemum can grant PCs access to equipment, but will not give it for free – the players need to roll to **Create** useful tags before going out on the job. This action can be boosted with negotiation tags and tags representing favorable relations with the Chrysanthemum handler.

Chrysanthemum might be in biotech, but their resources include security and cybersecurity gear, so they can provide the crew with weapons, hacking apps, and almost anything else they need to equip themselves to protect the cargo in cyberspace. The tags created can be kept at the job's end and added to loadout themes, with the weakness tag *tagged by Chrysanthemum*.

GENBI DANGANSEN SUPPORT

The crew also has the benefit of working with the powerful Genbi Dangansen Security system. They receive a holographic presentation explaining the train's layout, its defenses, and its capabilities.

You can share with the players the passive defensive measures that the train employs, including the vista wraps and the specific defenses on, in, and between the different cars (page 251). Note Dangansen doesn't allow anyone into the vista wrap generator car.

Don't overload the players with all of this information upfront – tell them that they have access to it when they need it and let them ask you when it is relevant. If they don't bother preparing properly, it's on them.

During the job, they can maneuver easily and effortlessly throughout the train. However, unless the train is under attack, they do not have similar authorization to venture outside of the train while it is moving, since the company sees this as a security risk.

The Karakuri Attendants might not be as helpful as the crew expects. Genbi Dangansen values the autonomy of the Attendants as a significant security asset and symbol of luxury and prestige. Even as the defenders, the crew might find that the Attendants get in their way in the worst of times.

DEFENDING AT MABOROSHI STATION

Represented as a small Japanese rural station with the Maboroshi Labs logo everywhere, this is where the encrypted data is boarded onto the train, depicted as pieces of artwork. As the hired security, the crew will oversee the Karakuri Attendants (page 254) as they bring the nine paintings onto the gallery car and place them up on frames along the left side wall.

Describe the look and feel of the train to the players. Even if they already studied the train's layout and defensive measures, this is the first time they get to experience it on-screen. Make it clear how much effort Dangansen Group puts in making the train beautiful, elegant and luxurious.

DEFENDING THE FIRST LEG

During the first leg, the Nightclouders send an advance team of three Nightclouder agents (Scale 1) to board the train covertly and hide therein before the main attack starts in the Second Leg.



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THE DISTRACTION

As a distraction to help with the infiltration, the Nightclouders launch a kraken-shaped hacking app against the train. The **Datastream Kraken**, a mechanical kraken Construct with a glowing core and multiple tentacles, tries to reach into the train and find the paintings. It's designed to draw attention and take time to defeat, but do little damage, as the Nightclouders don't want to risk damaging the paintings inside the train.

THE INFILTRATION

While the Kraken is attacking the train, the Nightclouder scouts enter the datastream on digital gliders and land on the train's roof. They stealthily progress across the roof until they get to the vista wrap generator car, drill a hole, and descend into the machinery cabinets to find a hiding place.

There are several ways that the PCs can catch on to the stealthy infiltration:

- If the PCs defeat the Kraken especially swiftly – within one or two actions – then they will hear the impact of the scouts landing on the roof.
- If a PC chooses to scout or scan other parts of the train while the Kraken attack is ongoing, a successful action may reveal the presence of the infiltrators.
- If a PC goes outside of the train during the fight, they might perceive the scouts while they are moving from car to car. Present this as a Threat such as *You hear footsteps behind you*, ideally together with a Kraken Threat, forcing the PC to choose what to focus on.
- If they inspect the train for damage after the fight is over, they can find the spot in the roof of the generator car where the scouts got in.

As a Consequence, give the Nightclouder infiltrators *stealthy-3* (as in their Challenge profile). To avoid revealing the clandestine attempt, keep these Consequences to yourself as long as the players are unaware of the infiltration; reveal them only when the PCs begin to actively search for the Nightclouders.

If the scouts are detected or found, they will try to slip away, find a different hiding place and complete their infiltration. If this also becomes impossible, they will disconnect, even risking brain damage; they do everything they can to avoid getting caught, imprisoned, and interrogated.

DATASTREAM KRAKEN

TAGS & STATUSES

The Kraken's metallic body is composed of the core and six long, slippery tentacles, all in glinting silver. Each tentacle is Scale 1, has its own *destroy-tentacle* Limit, and can be attacked individually. Actions that target several or all tentacles are Scale 2. As long as any of the tentacles are intact, the core will keep its distance from the train while the tentacles attack the train occupants. When the tentacles are all destroyed, the core will close the distance and ram into the train.

LIMITS

CRASH 4 **DESTROY TENTACLE 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

armored core, *powerful tentacles*, *firewalled-core-2*, Scale 2 (each tentacle is Scale 1)

SPECIALS

PROTECTED CORE: As long as any of the tentacles are intact, they take any attack directed at the core. PCs physically approaching the core take a Consequence from the tentacles first.

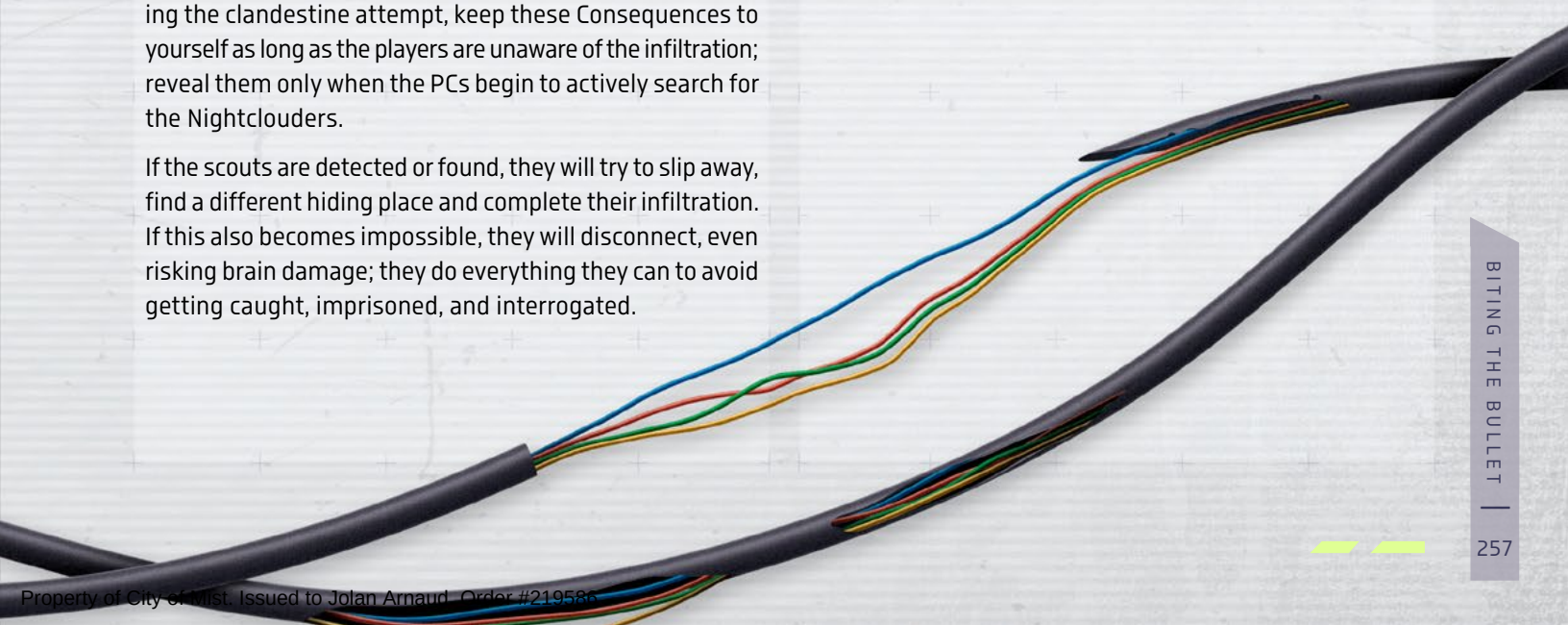
›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Reach with silvery tentacles and wrap around the train's defenders*

» **Grab any available limb and pull violently (*restrained-1* and *bruised-1* to as many opponents as there are tentacles remaining)**

› *(After the tentacles are gone) Move at full speed towards the train*

» **Ram the train, shaking it from side to side (*disoriented-2* to everyone inside and *glitching-1* to the Genbi Dangansen)**



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DEFENDING AT DANGAN CENTRAL

SUSPICIOUS MAINTENANCE

When the Genbi Dangansen arrives, Karakuri Attendants will "service" the train to check the encryption. The PCs, whether on board the train or scoping it out from within the station, see them bring aboard a specialist Karakuri Attendant shaped like a painter to tighten the compression. PCs who inquire are refused further information politely by the Karakuri Attendants, as usual, and will not be allowed to interfere with the process. However, successfully studying this process can still provide a few details:

- The specialist Attendant seems to take a lot of time and delicate care to verify the encryption, as if they are expecting it to be degraded for some reason.
- A part of the securing process is properly affixing the paintings to their heavy racks; moving them around might compromise that encryption.

THE NIGHTCLOUDER INFILTRATORS

The Nightclouders scouts in the vista wrap generator car, if still present, are well-hidden. Finding them requires maxing out a progress Limit of *security-scan:4*. If found, the scouts' first priority is to not get caught alive, and they will do everything required to achieve this end, including disconnecting themselves unsafely from their Harness.

A SECOND INFILTRATOR

While the paintings are being serviced, the Nightclouders send their second infiltrator: a hacker from their ranks, disguised as a Karakuri Attendant, has infiltrated Dangan Central and will board the Genbi Dangansen as part of the movement of Attendants on and off the train. The hacker's goal is to find the defenders (i.e., the PCs) and damage their capabilities directly and clandestinely before the attack during The Second Leg. The more damage the hacker wreaks, the more the PCs might suspect an interloper and take actions to locate the offender.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

The players might choose to look through the train for any remaining scouts from The First Leg, or for the hacker if they start suspecting that something is amiss. They might also want to set up preemptive defenses on the train in preparation for the rest of the trip, or look around the gallery car to find out more about the Attendant's activities during the data securing process. They have limited time to carry out any of these activities.

Set a *servicing-complete:3* Limit as a timer. As a Consequence for any action, or if the players spend a lot of time discussing options and don't carry out any actions, apply *servicing-complete-1* to the Limit. When it maxes out, the train leaves the station and begins The Second Leg.

DISGUISED NIGHTCLOUDER HACKER

TAGS & STATUSES

This hacker remains in disguise and continues to weaken the security team (the crew) until they begin to suspect sabotage and take action to expose who is behind it. This could be resolved with a quick outcome, or by maxing out expose, depending on your cinematic considerations.

LIMITS

CRASH 3 **TAKE OVER –**

TAGS & STATUSES

boosted-focus-2, *disguised-2*, *firewalled-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *As a Karakuri Attendant: Ask politely to scan one of the PCs "for security purposes" and start doing it without waiting for an answer*
- » **Cause a glitch in the avatar they are scanning, the retreat apologetically (*glitched-2*)**
- » **Digitally tag the target, excusing this as a security measure by the Genbi Dangansen (*tagged-2*)**
- » **Release an annoying digital sprite fluttering out of reach, disguised as a UI error (*distracted-2*)**
- » **Sabotage programs or avatars (burn a tag, but reveal this only when the PC next invokes the tag, or checks the program's condition)**

› *Once exposed: Gesture menacingly towards their enemies with their avatar glitching and flickering between an Attendant and a Nightclouder*
- » **Unleash their full might as a hacker (any of the above Consequences, but with double the Effects)**
- » **Disappear into nearby Karakuri Attendants and change its painted pattern to blend in (gain *which-one-is-it-3* or Deny Them Something They Want)**

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DEFENDING THE SECOND LEG

This is when the Nightclouders mount their main attack, regardless of whether their earlier plans were successful or not. They appear in full force riding flying shadowy beasts reminiscent of the baku hybrids. The main group (Scale 2) board the train in the Karakuri Attendant storage car and move to the gallery in order to steal the paintings. A smaller force (Scale 1) stays behind on the flying steeds to catch the paintings when they are thrown off board.

THE NIGHTCLOUDER'S ADVANCE

As the scene progresses, continue to describe the ongoing Threat of the Nightclouder attack. As a Consequence, have the Nightclouders advance another stage in their attack:

- *The Nightclouders continue to advance...*
  - » **Board**
  - » **Enter the first car**
  - » **Enter the second car**
  - » **Enter the third car**
  - » **Enter the fourth car**
  - » **Blow a hole in the hull**
  - » **Begin unloading the paintings**
  - » **Finish unloading**
  - » **Escape**

Any of these stages can be interrupted and set back by the PCs actions. For example, if the PCs seal the hole made by the Nightclouders, they will have to reopen it or unload the paintings another way. Determine how many Nightclouders are in every car based on their progress and the ongoing fight with the PCs.

Once the Nightclouders have boarded, they start moving back through the train. Their goal is not to take the PCs down, although they will do so if pressed; they want to get to the gallery car as quickly as possible. They will not back down or stop now that they are so close to the object of their obsession.

CONTROLLING THE VISTA WRAPS

The party controlling the Vista Wraps (page 251) via the Vista Wrap Generator Car (page 253) – whether the Nightclouder infiltrators from the first leg, Dangansen security, or the PCs – can use it to hinder their opponents.

A NASTY SURPRISE

This scene is also when the final twist is revealed: the Failed Baku Hybrids. Once a few paintings have been moved from their stands, have a couple of hybrids (Scale 1) shimmer into being and immediately attack someone nearby. See **Springing the Baku Hybrids at the Right Moment** (page 255).

THE DRAMATIC LAST MILE

The fighting throughout this leg should be exciting and dangerous. If the PCs manage to stay out of harm's way and seem to be in control of the situation, you have several ways to notch up the difficulty level on the fly:

- If the Hacker from the station is still on board, they will rejoin the fight, still disguised as an Attendant if possible.
- If the scouts are still embedded in the vista wrap generator car, once their job enabling the boarding is done, they can jump out and surprise the PCs with an attack from an unexpected direction.
- Karakuri Attendants can join and "help" the PCs while actually getting in their way.
- The Hybrids themselves can appear at any point where they will shock the players and subvert their expectations.
- If any of the combatants use methods that inflict heavy damage to the train, you can set a *derail:4* Limit, representing the entire train reeling and shaking and eventually plummeting into the wilds of cyberspace.

ARRIVING AT CHRYSANTHEMUM STATION

The station representing the Chrysanthemum server is similar to the Maboroshi Station but larger and with a different corporate logo.

If any Failed Baku Hybrids or infiltrators remain active on the train, the corporation hardens its Domain firewall (*firewalled-5*, Scale 4) around the terminal and refuses to open the doors, not even to its own mercenaries. No one goes in or out until the threat is neutralized one way or another.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS DEFENSE

A clever way of stealing the paintings would be to take on the job of the defending crew and pretend to do it well, gaining the trust of the Dangansen security team and their clients just before betraying them.

If the crew successfully defends the cargo during The First Leg and in Dangan Central station, you may reward them all with *trusted-3*, which represent both digital permissions and interpersonal trust that they can exploit during The Second Leg to escape with the paintings.

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ATTACKING CREW ITINERARY

In this scenario, the crew are hired by a third party or run the heist for themselves to steal the data from the train before it reaches its final destination. The Nightclouders are Maboroshi Labs employees who worship the Baku Mythos and are securing the transfer to Chrysanthemum Biosciences.

They are emotionally invested in the project and zealously guard the data. After the transfer, they will become Chrysanthemum employees so as to remain close to this Source.

A successful heist involves boarding the train (presumably on an equally-fast vehicle), offloading the paintings (presumably to a vehicle), and escaping into cyberspace.

THE NIGHTCLOUDER'S DEFENSIVE PLAN

The Nightclouders work in tandem with the Dangansen IC – such as the Karakuri Attendants, the Vista Wraps, and the protective decal of the Hull – to detect and eliminate any intruders. If you feel the crew is advancing too fast (and don't forget the Baku Hybrids at the end), the Nightclouders can deploy a Sōhei IC (page 129) to take care of the crew.

PREPARING FOR THE JOB

HEIST PREPARATIONS

Rather than play out the prep before the heist, you can start the heist *in media res* and use flashbacks to the Prep Sequence during the heist, Ocean-style (see **Heists**, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 125).

The crew's employers or informants have partial information on the Genbi Dangansen security systems. They can tell the crew about the vista wraps, although they don't have a full list of them. They also know that the first car after the engine, the Karakuri Attendant storage, is the one most easy to break into, and they know what's in each car, although they don't know the exact security measures employed. They know about the Karakuri Attendants and the Nightclouders, and can explain who both groups are and why they are on the train, but do not know their specific capabilities. Finally, they can provide a general timeline for the trip – anything directly under Train Itinerary (page 251).

The crew's first decision will be whether to board the train while it's moving (The First Leg) or while it's stopped in Dangan Central. Warn them that the station itself is more heavily protected.

An important part of the heist is to plan an exit strategy. Each painting is *large* and *bulky*, so carrying all of them will require getting a getaway vehicle or pulling some other stunt such as detaching the last car. The paintings are already compressed, so making them any smaller is impossible without a truly powerful compression program. A very daring crew might consider digitally tagging the paintings and then throwing them overboard, into the wilds of cyberspace, then go chasing them down wherever they end up.

ATTACKING THE CORPORATE STATIONS

Due to their tight, top-grade cybersecurity, the Maboroshi Labs Domain and the Chrysanthemum Bioscience Domain are probably unrealistic targets for the attacking crew, which is why the crew is attacking the train while in transit. The best they can get is a live feed showing them the data being loaded at Maboroshi Station, or perhaps the station's layout.

Therefore, the attacking itinerary focuses on the first and second legs of the journey, and the stop at Dangan Station. You can describe the train being loaded, leaving Maboroshi Station, and (after the job) arriving at Chrysanthemum Station as cutscenes (see the **Defending Crew Itinerary** for a description of Maboroshi station, page 256).

ATTACKING DURING THE FIRST LEG

This is the crew's first chance to board the train and carry out the heist. To do this, they will need to enter the datastream and board the train, then make it into the gallery car with either brute force or stealth, steal the paintings, and make away with them.

BOARDING, BREACHING, AND ADVANCING IN THE TRAIN

To board the train, the crew needs to bring their vehicle side-by-side with the train (a quick outcome for the pilot, with *unstable-2* as a Consequence), and then each leap (or otherwise transport themselves) onto the train (another quick outcome for each, or a Scaled quick outcome for all). The danger facing them is from the Vista Wraps, which will attempt to change into an appropriate vista to counter their abilities.

Once on the train, the crew must breach the train's Hull and deal with its protective decals, all the while still under the Vista Wraps' effects. The crew can choose to enter any car; breaking into the Karakuri Attendant Storage Car is easiest,

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and the car itself is ideal for regrouping and planning next steps before carrying on. Other cars are harder and less safe to break into, but closer to the ultimate goal. Refer to the layout of the **Genbi Dangansen** (page 251) in order to see which obstacles and opportunities each car offers. In any car, you can always **Present a New Challenge** (Karakuri Attendant or Nightclouder) as a Consequence, if needed.

Moving between cars is not trivial, as the doors separating the cars are locked. Opening them with hacking, weapons or any other means requires a quick outcome, with *encryption-2* hindering all attempts.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

Once the attack begins, set an *arrive:5* Limit as a timer, and apply *arriving-1* as a Consequence whenever the crew is forced to wait or retreat in order to not be discovered. When *arrive* maxes out, the train reaches Dangan Central, where the gallery fills with Karakuri Attendants servicing the paintings. This means that the crew must hide – perhaps in the machinery in the Vista Wraps Generator Car or the first class seats in the Passenger Car. See **Attacking At Dangan Central** (page 261) for what might happen then.

RAISING THE ALARM

The second way the crew can be stymied before they even reach the gallery is if they're spotted and allow one of the train's defenders to raise the alarm, which can be a simple Consequence delivered in case they do not prevent a guardian from escaping and informing others (**Escalate the Situation**). In this case, the entirety of available defenders – Nightclouders (scale 2) and Karakuri Attendants (Scale 2) descend on the crew, possibly necessitating a tactical retreat.

A NASTY SURPRISE

Once the PCs have their hands on the paintings, and before they manage to offload them from the car, complicate matters by introducing the Failed Baku Hybrids. This raises the general alarm if it didn't yet happen, and means chaos breaks loose in the gallery. See **Springing the Baku Hybrids at the Right Moment** (page 255).

ATTACKING AT DANGAN STATION

See a description of the station on page 253.

The crew might avoid the station entirely by retreating from the train and trying to board the train again after it leaves for the second leg of the journey. If they are here at all, they will be in one of two places during this stop: on board the train after having infiltrated it during the first leg, or outside the station trying to break in.

The station is teeming with Karakuri Attendants – definitely more than the crew could handle face to face. The gallery car is also full of Attendants examining and working on the paintings. The crew can perhaps infiltrate and scope out the work being done, but not steal the paintings themselves. The best that they can do is sit tight and wait until the train starts moving again.

AVOIDING DETECTION

During the servicing, use Threats of attendants and Nightclouders searching the train and Consequences of burning tags and reducing statuses representing stealth, hiding places, and disguises. The PCs must endure one or two rounds of this, through actions like changing position, hacking security measures, preparing new disguises, etc. If they remain undetected, the train begins to move again and begins The Second Leg.

BREAKING INTO DANGAN

If the crew tries to break into the train via the station, they will need to bypass security measures of Dangan Central. You can simplify this by setting *infiltrate:5* and *intrusion-countermeasures-3* and let the players try making their way onto the train. Alternatively, you can use the **Intrusion Countermeasure AI** Challenge Profile (*Metro:Otherscape,* page 308) to represent an advanced security system in the shape of a Karakuri Attendant in conductor's uniform. Add observant Karakuri Attendants all over the station, and Nightclouders when the PCs arrive at the train's platform.

ATTACKING DURING THE SECOND LEG

The crew might decide to board the train only now, or be forced to complete the mission now because of a delayed or failed attempt earlier. If this is a second attempt after a previous one failed and alerted security, the Nightclouders and the Dangansen IC are *alert-2*.

Boarding the train and completing the mission is the same in this leg as it is during The First Leg, but reset *arrive* and when it maxes out this time, the train reaches Chrysanthemum Station, at which point the heist crew must disconnect or risk a much more painful fate of being caught by Chrysanthemum ICs (use a collective of Sōhei ICs with the Naginata 2L8 Special, page 129).

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AFTERMATH

Eventually, someone (or no one?) has the artwork. But is it the right someone?

- **As defenders:** If the Nightclouders stole any of the paintings, Chrysanthemum will not be pleased. They will probably try to leverage the situation and offer to pay the crew the second half of the payment if they go out and retrieve the paintings from wherever the Nightclouders are keeping them. If the crew does not do that, they will burn some bridges and take a hit to their reputation in the underworld. Delivering all the paintings intact, however, will be seen as the act of utmost professionalism it is, and will probably lead to valuable contacts and job offers.
- **As attackers:** If any of the paintings were successfully stolen by the PCs, this means they are in possession of quickly degrading bulky data packets that randomly unleash dangerous digital beasts. Delivering the cargo to the crew's employers in time might be a challenge in itself. Additionally, Chrysanthemum, Maboroshi, and the Dangansen Group all have strong motives to uncover and punish the crew. Was the heist overt enough for them to even know who the thieves are? How far are the corporations willing to go to retrieve the stolen data?
- Either way, if any Hybrids survived they could be studied and weaponized by some company, so this might not have been the last time the crew faced them.



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LOST & FLOODED

Enter the world of the discarded



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JOB BRIEFING

The neverending march of progress to innovate and increase shareholder profits means that some things just get left behind. Unused stock, obsolete tech, and discarded prototypes eventually end up drifting into some backwater pit. In the eastern Tokyo Megacity, that pit is the **Underground Discharge Channels** underneath the Old Tokyo district.

This sprawling facility was once built to divert flood waters during typhoon seasons. Abandonment and lack of maintenance has turned it into an artificial swamp, stretching across an astonishingly wide area beneath the ground. It's filthy, toxic, and several reports claim that yōkai are gathering there in large numbers, away from human eyes.

And this is where your next job is, of course. Amid the filth and sogginess, you are sent to purge the tunnels from a troublesome yōkai infestation. Keep your eyes peeled while navigating the darkness, though, as old treasures and buried memories might surface.

BACKGROUND

Inspired by the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel constructed underneath Kasukabe in 2006, officials later greenlit the construction of similar facilities throughout the Megacity. One such facility was built under what is now Old Tokyo, but when the district was abandoned by the powers that be, so too were the tunnels underneath.

Years of neglect has turned the **Underground Discharge Channels** into its own biome: a shadowed bog, permanently flooded, with heaps of trash forming overgrown islands.

Over the years all sorts of strange lizards and insects made their home in the Channels, but none as strange as the yōkai **Chirizuka Kaiō**. A powerful being that looks like a hairy red man, resembling a small and filthy oni, Chirizuka Kaiō wears a golden crown and claims to be the king of trash and of the tsukumogami – animated spirits of discarded objects. Away from prying eyes, Chirizuka Kaiō marked the Channels as his own dominion and has been amassing followers to create a haven for the lost, human and yōkai alike.

In one of the latest earthquakes to hit the eastern shore, new tunnels were revealed, connecting Chirizuka Kaiō's realm with a buried secret: the **Matsuyama Networks** coffin complex. Years ago, the telecommunication company built this underground facility as housing for their employees, allowing them to live and work inside personal tubes – commonly nicknamed 'coffins' – as they logged into the Matsuyama VR Domain. The next monsoon season, a power outage resulted in every worker in the facility losing their lives.

Employees who sign up for a 24/7 job deep underground tend to not have extensive social lives, and Matsuyama Networks was able to quickly cover up the loss of manpower and file it away. When Chirizuka Kaiō came upon this tomb, he was overjoyed with the opportunity to make it into his **"Forgotten Throne"**, and moved in. His presence is now causing many of the discarded equipment and supplies left behind by Matsuyama Networks to slowly come to life as tsukumogami.

Recent events on the surface may spell trouble for the king of trash. The **Neo-Samurai** (page 177) currently lay claim to much of Old Tokyo, and they've been scouring it top to bottom for Sources they can use to reinforce their authority. **Kojiro Takao,** ex-salaryman and former employee of Matsuyama Networks, is leading a squad into the Underground Discharge Channles, but he's not going after

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Sources. The bitter man is looking for the old Matsuyama Network, hoping to find in it some old data he could use to squeeze some money out of the company.

One old hard drive is indeed still functional, containing confidential data and proof that the facility existed. Were anyone to get a hold of this hard drive, they could use it to expose or even blackmail Matsuyama Networks. However, getting hold of the hard drive may not be as simple as picking it up. In the presence of Chirizuka Kaiō, the hard drive has sprouted arms and legs...

HOOKS

- Matsuyama Networks executive **Chiba Takahiro**, always sporting a slim suit and a thin smile, covertly hires the crew to search for the abandoned worker's facility and clear out any yōkai. Takahiro believes there may be some decades-old data and legal documents left behind that he can exploit to get ahead in the company, but he tries to sell the job as an official corp request to "clear out squatters" from corp holdings, adding as a seemingly less pressing objective to "bring back any usable hard drives or files you find". This request is accompanied by an extensive Non-Disclosure Agreement he asks the crew to sign, which forbids them from checking what's on the drives or discussing this matter with others.
- Konda Hikaru, a cigar-smoking, fire-aligned member of the Bureau of Onmyō, has received reports of increasing tsukumogami and other yōkai activity underneath Old Tokyo. Held up by red tape, but with access to a nice outsourcing budget, Konda tasks the crew with clearing out the "main nest" of hostile yōkai before they become a bigger problem.
- A PC interested in finding a new Source begins to receive visions. A swamp of concrete. Objects with arms and legs. And a red figure with a broken crown sitting on a dark throne underground, bathed in squares of light, welcoming all who are lost.

LAYOUT

- The Underground Discharge Channel
- Junk Island
- The Coffin Complex
- Inside The Coffin Complex
- Forgotten Throne

TRASH DIVING

THE UNDERGROUND DISCHARGE CHANNEL

> This chamber is so immense, it's hard to believe it was built at all, let alone underground. It stretches into the distance, the far away ceiling supported by giant round pillars of stone, each as wide as a bus. The pillars are placed in evenly spaced rows throughout the concrete cavern, like uncaring sentinels that keep watch while rot and decay spread all around them.
>
> The chamber is filled with flood water up to waist-high, the water's dark color and thick cover of moss obscuring everything beneath the surface. Over the years the place has turned into an artificial swamp, and in several places, hiding in the dark or partly lit by still-active electrical lightning, are small islands made of trash build-ups, home to various insects and slimy reptiles. At the far end of the swamp a tower of trash rises from the water, lit by strangely mobile light sources.
>
> Maybe it's the vast darkness that obscures how large this cistern truly is, or the fumes from the garbage and fetid water that mess with your senses, or the distant *bloop* from something hitting the water; Whatever it is, it's impossible to shake the feeling that someone – or something – is watching you.

The Underground Discharge Channel is an abandoned, pillared concrete cistern. Separated into several immense chambers and stretching for miles, this massive underground facility was built to divert flood waters during rain and typhoon season. Years of abandonment has led to its structure falling apart and a permanent, waist-high pool of water to accumulate.

REACHING THE CISTERN

The cistern is accessible via the sewer system underneath Old Tokyo after navigating a maze of abandoned tunnels. The navigation requires a quick outcome, with likely Consequences being getting *filthy-1* or getting gear *muddy-1*. If they blunder the navigation completely, the crew suffers *lost-2* which affects subsequent attempts. Depending on the story hook, Konda Hikaru or Chiba Takahiro can provide *an old map of the sewers*.

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On the swamp's far side is the Junk Island, the largest pile of trash in the cistern, which is lit by the flashlights carried by the Neo-Samurai. The crew will need to navigate their way through, dealing with darkness, scavengers, debris, and tsukumogami lurking in the water – see the Challenge profile. Whether they are clearing out the cistern of yōkai or searching for The Coffin Complex, their search will eventually continue to Junk Island.

NAVIGATING THE UNDERGROUND DISCHARGE CHANNEL

TAGS & STATUSES

Any scavengers the PCs encounter are members of Chirizuka Kaiō's domain. Discarded by society, they have become loyal citizens of this strange home. Some are fearful of newcomers, others are willing to suspiciously let strangers approach. Some are even willing to give their lives to protect the Forgotten Throne.

Any tsukumogami that shows up disappears a moment later, scattering back into the water and darkness.

LIMITS

TRAVERSE 4

TAGS & STATUSES

darkness, *junk everywhere*, *waist-high flood waters*

SPECIALS

OBSTACLE MAZE: Whenever the status on *traverse* changes, create a story tag representing a new obstacle in the environment and burn any previously created story tags from this Special. Use tags such as *a huge heap of trash*, *collapsed pillar*, *fallen debris*, *half-submerged vehicle* etc.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The crew makes their way through the trash swamp*
» **A PC gets foul water in their gear or in their mouth or eyes (*short-circuit-2*, *sick-2*, or burn a tag)**

› *The water's surface ripples*
» **A discarded hose, piece of mesh, or bicycle (a tsukumogami) tangles around a PC's leg into the water and pulls them under, (*tangled-2* and then *filthy-2*, *sick-2*, or *drowning-2*)**

› *A voice mutters to itself in the darkness or something creaks*
» **An underwater scavenger appears on a raft or an island, instantly suspicious of the crew (Present a New Challenge: Scavenger, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 314, with *suspicious-2*)**
» **A pile of trash topples over (pushed by tsukumogami), creating an avalanche (*bruised-2* and *buried-2* to all PCs)**

JUNK ISLAND

The towering garbage heap is not a random accumulation of filth and refuse like the other islands, as the junk shows signs of having been gathered from all over. Old appliances, large pieces of discarded construction material and countless pieces of molding fabric have been piled to form a reasonably stable island almost 20 meters in diameter. And it's occupied.

On the island's highest "peak", four men stand, lighting each other with flashlights. From a distance it's hard to tell who they are, but they don't seem to be aware of you, for now. They all wear boxy armor and hold *yari*, traditional spears, except for one, who wears high-tech armor and seems to be carrying a sword. This man is berating the others in low tones.

THE NEO-SAMURAI SQUAD

Currently gathered on the mound are a squad of **Neo-Samurai,** led by **Kojiro Takao**. Takao uses the Neo-Samurai Challenge profile (page 182) without *honorable-3*, and the other three are ashigaru (page 182) with Scale 1 and with *loyal-2* instead of *honorable-2*.

Takao used to work at Matsuyama Networks in IT, but one too many missed promotions led him to quit and find purpose with the Neo-Samurai. He postures like a refined warrior, but he is in fact still holding an executive mindset, always looking for an edge on his competitors. This is what led him to grab a squad of new recruits and head out into the Channel in search of the The Coffin Complex that Matsuyama Networks buried here, claiming it's a yōkai hot spot (he's right, but doesn't know it). In truth, he is hoping to use his technical know-how to get into the systems and dig something useful to use against his previous employers to force them to give him the position he deserves – or at least, squeeze some money out of them.

The Neo-Samurai are not expecting to find another group of explorers, and are not likely to notice them from a far unless the crew drew attention to themselves. If the PCs listen in on Takao, whether from a distance or up close, they can hear him spending the next several minutes admonishing his squad for expressing their fears of this place, reminding them of the "tenets of Bushidō", with which they should steel their resolve. Takao makes his soldiers repeat the mission to him: to explore the large tunnel nearby and find "the coffin complex".

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PCs who attempt to sneak up on the Neo-Samurai will need to consider the *uneven terrain* of the island, made of hundreds of pieces of trash all ready to squeak and creak when stepped on.

If the crew approach the Neo-Samurai openly, the squad will immediately tense up in suspicion. If the crew was hired by executive Chiba Takahiro and his name is mentioned, Takao gains *furious-3* and can barely hide his anger and envy toward the "pencil-pushing blowhard". Takahiro was formerly Takao's boss, and if the crew also make it known that they are on a job for Takahiro to find The Coffin Complex, Takao will even become hostile.

If the crew gains his trust, Takao can tell them that a drone survey showed that a new tunnel has opened up from the discharge channel, probably created by an earthquake in the recent past. He avoids mentioning the complex, and instead says in general terms that it is the Neo-Samurai's duty to rid the place of any yōkai, which is why they intend to explore that tunnel. If convinced to join forces with the crew, give them the story tags *Kojiro Takao* and *ashigaru squad*.

Whether the crew engages with the Neo-Samurai or tries to avoid them, use a Threat when appropriate to start the next part of this scene.

ATTACK OF THE SWARM

Out of seemingly nowhere, a **Tsukumogami Swarm** attacks! This swarm is made up of dozens of pieces of trash and forgotten office appliances come to life, including ancient computer mice that move as snake-like heads on tail-like cords, monitors that pull themselves along by wires and cables, mobile radiators jumping like accordions, staplers, coffee mugs, shoes, and lamps, all moving on their own as if they have arms and legs. They gather from Junk Island, rise from the waters, or float from the darkness, all at once.

When the swarm is overcome it disperses into the darkness of the cistern, and the surviving tsukumogami retreat all together in the same direction, toward the The Coffin Complex.

Takao will yell at his people to form up, and the ashigaru will hold out their spears with terrified stances. While the crew deals with the swarm on their end, the Neo-Samurai fight in the background, but could come to the aid of the crew if they see someone in need; see the Challenge profile for how. If they do help this way, they give the entire crew *indebted*, which represents their expectation for gratitude and loyalty from the PC; this is what Kojiro calls "honor".

After the fight, Takao will likely form a strong opinion about the crew, whether thankfulness for fighting side-by-side with them, awe at their greater combat abilities, or suspicion, if he was not aware of their presence before.

TSUKUMOGAMI SWARM ATTACK

LIMITS

SMASH 3 **EXORCIZE 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

discarded junk, *mean*, *uneven terrain*, three Scale 2 collectives

SPECIALS

LAST-MOMENT RESCUE: When you deliver a Consequence to a PC from a tsukumogami, you may instead have Kojiro or one of the ashigaru save the PC at the last moment. If you do, the crew gets *indebted-2*. If the crew has *indebted-5* or higher, the Neo-Samurai will not provide this help any longer.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A computer monitor or household appliance coils its cables*
» **Cables lash out (*entangled-2*) and constrict (*strangled-2*)**

› *Staplers leap forward like snapping piranha*
» **Staplers bite down (*stapled-2*)**

› *Moist shirts and torn pants jump toward a PC's head*
» **The clothes wrap themselves tight (*strangled-2* and *blinded-2*)**

› *A dozen tsukumogami swarm a PC*
» **The PC must either retreat or be overrun (the player chooses *off-balance-3* or *swarmed-3*)**
» **An off-balanced PC is pushed down the junk pile and into the water, where more tsukumogami hold them down (*bruised-2*, *entangled-3*, and *drowning-3*)**

› *A dozen tsukumogami swarm an ashigaru and pull him away as he panics*
» **The ashigaru flails their spear and hits a PC (*bleeding-3* or *shocked-3*)**
» **The ashigaru screams as he rolls down the slope, battered and slashed, then dies horribly while choking underwater (everyone gets *rattled-3*)**

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THE LYING KOJIRO

During this scene and later, Kojiro's go-to approach toward the PCs is feigning friendliness while deceiving them regarding his true intentions and even using them as cannon fodder. He treats his ashigaru the same way, because he doesn't think they'll support his admittedly selfish goals.

This stands in stark opposition to Bushidō, in which Honesty is a core virtue, but Kojiro is content with some self-delusion and has convinced himself that the Bushidō pillars of Honor and Respect are "more important" and therefore it's okay to lie in order to put Matsuyama Networks in their place (and for him to get the respect he deserves). Beneath the guise of an honorable warrior, he's just a self-serving slimy bastard.

Kojiro is not a great liar, and it shouldn't be difficult to see he's hiding something. He'll come partly clean if caught, but then invent some new half-true story ("we're actually here to find proof of Matsuyama's crime") and give an excuse as to why he kept it hidden ("I feel shameful for having worked for such a cruel company").

The ashigaru start with *loyal-2*, but they start having doubts once Kojiro is exposed as a liar. If the PCs push on this they can eventually make the ashigaru turn against their dishonorable master, and leave him behind, returning to the surface in shame.

THE COFFIN COMPLEX

A claustrophobic tunnel of natural rock leads from the vast chamber of concrete behind into a much smaller, but still intimidatingly large, chamber. This cave rises four stories tall, and most of it is occupied by a single circular building of gray concrete, which seemed to have been built into this natural cavity. Massive cables stretch all over along support arches built into the walls. Unused construction equipment sits abandoned. Whatever this building is, *this* side of it was never meant to be seen by the public.

There are no windows along the building's walls, and no clear entrance.

The complex was built inside a small natural fissure that was widened to accommodate the construction. Much of the area was dug out to provide necessary space for the complex and to house the cables connecting the building to the outside world.

BACKHOE LOADER TSUKUMOGAMI

The loader doesn't have to be destroyed in order for the crew to continue past it. They can also overcome the Challenge by binding it, or by hurrying past it and into the entrance to the complex – it can't follow them there

LIMITS

WRECK 4 | EXORCIZE 4 | TAKE OVER – | RESTRAIN 4

TAGS & STATUSES

rusted machinery, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Raise its backhoe or loader to strike*
- » **Slam someone with its metal arms (*broken-ribs-3* and *knocked-back-3*)**
- » **Slam a part of the wall or one of the supporters, sending rubble or cables flying (*buried-3* or *electrocuted-3* and add *rubble* or *flailing live cables*)**

› *Turn around with various parts groaning*
- » **Stand in the way of a PC trying to run past it (Escalate the situation)**
- » **Crawl up and perch on the walls of the complex, spotting anyone trying to sneak past it (Escalate the situation or remove two tiers of stealth statuses)**

› *Stretch against bindings with a deafening screech of metal against metal*
- » **Some bindings begin to snap (remove two tiers of restraint statuses)**

The original entrance, at surface level, was filled out with concrete when the place was abandoned. There's only one other door leading inside, a maintenance entrance half-hidden behind thick data cables. It is unlocked, but not unguarded.

Some of the construction equipment was left behind, as it wasn't worth bringing back up to the surface. After being abandoned for so long, in the vicinity of Chirizuka Kaiō, the construction vehicles have become tsukumogami. They are "playing dead" around the crew, waiting for the right moment to surprisingly attack. One of them is the **Backhoe Loader Tsukumogami**, which sprouted mechanical legs from its undercarriage. Now, with a backhoe for one arm and a loader for the other, this machine has taken an intimidating mech-like appearance.

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If the Neo-Samurai are with the crew, a second vehicle should be around for them to face. Unless the crew is willing and able to help them, the Neo-Samurai are overwhelmed and routed, declaring a retreat back to the previous chamber. Kojiro Takao will decide to change tactics and let the crew wear themselves out against the defenses of the complex. He won't be rejoining the crew's efforts, instead making an appearance in the last scene.

INSIDE THE COFFIN COMPLEX

> Dusty hallways stretch throughout this buried building, stuffy with moisture and cramped with pipes, cables, and electrical junctions. These are supposed to be office spaces, but the tight corridors look like maintenance tunnels, and even the ceiling feels too low. Unsecured doors open to various rooms: storage boxes are disintegrated and moldy, server stations are rusty and crumbling. But most of the rooms contain coffins.
>
> These are not *actual* coffins, though, but bio-beds, within which employees would spend entire days, working and experiencing life in VR. Rows of metallic tubes sit slotted into the walls, some of the beds are open, revealing… the mummified remains of people in business suits. Okay, so maybe these *are* actual coffins.

The coffin complex has several floors, each made up of a single hallway that snakes around the building and opens into storage rooms, server rooms, and the numerous coffin rooms. There are one or two break rooms and meeting rooms, and a few rundown toilets.

All windows in the complex open into a central courtyard that used to have artificial grass and lighting, but Chirizuka Kaiō has since covered most of the windows up with mountains of trash, dirt, and filth after making the courtyard his Forgotten Throne. All windows in the lower two floors are effectively blocked, as is the single door leading to the courtyard, but it's possible to enter the courtyard through windows in the upper floors.

Each coffin is a long-term-sustaining bed system with a neuro VR helmet. There are hundreds of these coffins, over dozens of rooms. Almost all of them are filled with dry, mummified corpses, who suffered from malnourishment, their bodies decaying after their brains fried in the power surge. The technology is several generations out of date, and most of the data stored in the caches was corrupted by the power surge.

SEARCHING THE COFFIN COMPLEX

The crew could search the complex's floors by looking around, opening stuck doors, hacking into what remains of the system, etc.

If Kojiro is with the crew, he uses his knowledge of the place to deliberately point them at places that are *cluttered* to push them out of the way, while he tries to max out *Kojiro's-search*.

LIMITS

SEARCH 3 | **KOJIRO'S SEARCH 3**

SEARCH: The crew corners the *Matsuyama hard drive* near the entrance to the Forgotten Throne, into which it escapes.

KOJIRO'S SEARCH: Kojiro corners the *Matsuyama hard drive* near the entrance to the Forgotten Throne, into which it escapes. Kojiro follows first, and gets captured by Chirizuka Kaiō.

TAGS & STATUSES

darkness, *disconcerting-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The Matsuyama hard drive jumps out of hiding and runs through a tight opening or between coffins*
- » **It escapes through a tight opening (*stuck-3* to anyone chasing it)**
- » **Some coffins open and reveal their morbid content (*creeped-out-2*) or fall over the PC (*buried-3*)**

› *Something scurries through the dust, or among the coffins*
- » **A tsukumogami jumps out from an unexpected angle, snatches an item and run away (burn a tag)**
- » **A corpse appears to be moving until a tsukumogami suddenly appears from under it (*creeped-out-2*)**

› *The floor creaks or cracks spread along the ceiling*
- » **A section of floor or a section of ceiling collapses, hurting and separating the crew (*concussion-3* or *broken-leg-3*, and Escalate the Situation)**

- » **Kojiro makes progress chasing the hard drive (*Kojiro's-search-1*)creating an avalanche (*bruised-2* and *buried-2* to all PCs)**

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GHOSTS OF BURIED FURY

If you wish to complicate things even further for the PCs, consider introducing the ghosts of Matsuyama's deceased employees into the mix. Furious due to their untimely death caused by the company's exploitative ways, they will rip to shreds anyone associated with Matsuyama (a fact Takao will happily use against the crew to get his way), but can also be persuaded to help bring Matsuyama to justice. Use the Onryō (page 122) and/or the Funayurei-Haunted Office Complex (page 101) to represent these Challenges.

A single working *Matsuyama hard drive* can be found in the upper floors of the complex – but it'll run away the moment someone notices it. Chirizuka Kaiō's presence has turned it into a tsukumogami with arms and legs. Stored within it are legal records, employee rosters, and logs of blueprints and emails that show a ludicrous amount of negligence during the facility's construction. In the right (or wrong) hands, the records and codes in this hard drive could point to exploitable weaknesses in the company's current systems.

Searching the Coffin Complex is a Challenge. If the Neo-Samurai are with the crew, Kojiro Takao knows about this complex's sordid past, and will tell it to the crew. He will then try to deceive them in order to get them out of the way, see the Challenge for details.

THE FORGOTTEN THRONE

The circular courtyard at the center of the complex is accessible only through open or broken windows at the top of ramps of dirt and trash, making the place look like a huge funnel. At the bottom, surrounded by yellowed artificial grass mostly covered by piles of junk, is a large throne made out of a dozen office chairs welded together.

Sitting in that throne is what looks like a red, hairy creature, an ogre-like yōkai no larger than a child, with a cracked golden crown atop his head. Biting his sharp claws in an unseemly manner, the creature greets you with a smile of even sharper teeth.

"Welcome to my kingdom of castoffs, my dominion of debris, my territory of trash! I am King Chirizuka Kaiō and you have entered my Forgotten Throne. Speak, surfacers. What brings you to my haven?"

Chirizuka Kaiō sits on his throne with a fang-toothed grin. He is both regal yet crass, welcoming intruders with a booming voice one moment and then biting his toenails the next. He is wary of anyone who enters his kingdom well-armed, but is not immediately hostile.

Chirizuka Kaiō's main interest is in keeping the secrecy of his kingdom. He wants to be left alone, and to provide refuge for lost items and people (he sees little difference between the two). Whichever way the conversation progresses, the king will eventually demand the intruders – crew and Neo-Samurai alike if they're present – to give him their word they will not speak of this haven to those who would exploit or destroy it.

If the *Matsuyama hard drive* escaped here, or if the crew didn't look for it, it casually climbs atop Chirizuka Kaiō's shoulder when they approach. If the crew asks for the hard drive, Chirizuka Kaiō will initially refuse. He does not look kindly on surfacers taking a tsukumogami away from his haven. However, if the crew treats the hard drive with kindness or respect, the king can be persuaded to release his hold on the drive and give his blessing.

If Kojiro Takao arrived here first, he and his ashigaru are *surrounded-2* by tsukumogami, their weapons raised. Even if he came with or after the crew, he is disturbed and angry at the situation. He only sees a yōkai that can turn technology into other yōkai, and that keeps his treasure from him, or in other words – a threat. He demands Chirizuka Kaiō swear fealty to their Emperor, and when he obviously doesn't, the Neo-Samurai see no other option but to destroy him. If the hard drive is brought up in conversation, Kojiro will become tense, as his whole mission rests on finding this hard drive, and he refuses to accept defeat.

In short, Kojiro pushes for a fight. He asks the crew to aid him, promising tech and powerful allies in return.

TRASH FIGHT

The Neo-Samurai and Chirizuka Kaiō are likely to begin fighting, and both are likely to consider the crew as allies or enemies rather than casual bystanders.

Whichever party the crew allies with can provide story tags, such as *Kojiro Takao* and *ashigaru squad* or *tsukumogami support*. Alternatively, you can push the NPCs to the background, so if the crew fights against Chirizuka Kaiō, the Neo-Samurai will handle swarms of tsukumogami, or if fighting for Chirizuka Kaiō, he will sit back in his throne and watch as his trash fights for him.

The Forgotten Throne is Thin Place, with a *Mythos-strengthening aura*.

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BOONS OF THE FORGOTTEN THRONE

If the crew sides with Chirizuka Kaiō and promise to keep his domain a secret, they are welcome to come and go as they please. The king may even allow them to choose a tsukumogami as a helpful companion; see examples of tsukumogami under **Source-Touched Items** in the **Tokyo Street Catalog** (page 89). Alternatively, he may turn one of the PCs' favorite item into a tsukumogami, adding the tag *animated* to it (and turning it into a secondary character).

PCs who become full-fledged followers of the Forgotten Throne may consider the Prince of Trash (Exposure) theme kit for their next Mythos theme, or perhaps acquire a tsukumogami Companion theme!

PRINCE OF TRASH

CHIRIZUKA KAIŌ, KING OF TRASH

Chirizuka Kaiō is a powerful yōkai who claims dominion over trash and tsukumogami. This ogre-like creature wishes to expand his haven to accept all of the discarded, human and yōkai alike. He has no trust of humans other than those who join his realm, and he will defend his territory with ferocity.

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 | CONVINCE 4 | BANISH 5

TAGS & STATUSES

a king in his castle, *tough hide*, *shielded-by-tsukumogami-3*, *vulgar-3*, *wary-1*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Lean back on his Forgotten Throne and ask the guests to explain themselves*
- » **Snarl at a dishonest statement (*intimidated-3*)**
- » **Preach that, in this world, it is only a matter of time until everyone is discarded, the only place for us all is in the trash (*discouraged-3*)**

› *Raise his hands and command trash to attack, or guide the trash to flow like water*
- » **Tsukumogami attack (*bruised-2*, *bound-2*, *sliced-2* or *buried-2* to a group)**
- » **A wave of animated trash sweeps someone into a wall, burying them (*swept-away-4* and then *buried* with the same tier)**
- » **Tsukumogami rush to protect their king (gain *shielded-by-tsukumogami-3*)**

› *Get up close and flex his claws*
- » **Strike through armor and skin (*slashed-4* and burn one defensive tag)**

PRINCE OF TRASH

EXPOSURE MYTHOS

POWER TAGS

ANIMATE TRASH

DIVE THROUGH TRASH | STRONGER WHEN UNSEEN | CREATE TSUKUMOGAMI | GOT SOME TRASH ON ME | UNFAZED BY DEATH | SENSE THE FORGOTTEN | TURN YOUR GEAR AGAINST YOU | REPURPOSE ANYTHING | JUNKYARD ARTIST

WEAKNESS TAGS

PRONE TO SICKNESS | NERVOUS IN THE SPOTLIGHT | POOR QUALITY ITEMS | SMELLS OLD AND MUSTY

RITUAL

I must guide the discarded to this safe haven.

AFTERMATH

After the crew leaves the tunnels, do they leave behind a mess? More than there was before, that is.

- What happened to Chirizuka Kaiō? Was he slain and his haven left to rot, the tsukumogami slowly losing their animation until just piles of junk remain? Was he driven from the coffin complex, and if so, where is he rebuilding himself? If the crew side with Chirizuka Kaiō, will the coffin complex become a new hangout joint? There are still hundreds of bodies within. Chirizuka Kaiō thinks it's hilarious.
- What happened to Kojiro Takao and his group? If they were slain, would the rest of the Neo-Samurai swear revenge? If things end well for the Neo-Samurai, whether Kojiro managed to get what he wanted or outed as an honorless thug, the crew's reputation with the group will solidify and they will find themselves more welcome in Old Tokyo.
- How will the crew react to knowledge of Matsuyama Network's crimes? If the crew found the *Matsuyama hard drive*, would they try to blackmail the company or look for someone to sell the hard drive to? Will the company or its zaibatsu try to silence them? If they were originally hired by Chiba Takahiro, did they hand over the hard drive to him? If not, they just might make themselves an enemy out of a desperate man.

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THE KENKO RUINS

Reaping the bounty in the wake of disaster



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BACKGROUND

The Kenko Ruins is an open scenario in which the crew explores a forbidden ruin, once a corporate stronghold, while maneuvering between servants of kami of disease who are self-appointed judges of the wastes, and the stern Nano-butai officers who are trying to cleanse the land from the residual nanites.

There are two themes at work here: The fear of strangers, which all inhabitants of the wastes contend with, and the fallout of the neglect that created the wastelands in the first place.

See the Hooks below for a variety of reasons to bring your crew into the wastes.

JOB BRIEFING

In the mountains there's a place where no one goes. The **Kuroi Yogore** ("black stain"), the source of the nanoplague, the place where it all began. All manner of strange death awaits those who enter that land, and in the ruined facility itself, even worse things lurk – spirits of disease and vengeance, or so they say.

But there's also great treasure to be found there. Data caches and forbidden tech, which corps will kill for. Containers of the original nano gel, maybe even clean and ready to be programmed! And the disease spirit themselves, could this Source be harnessed somehow?

In the mountains there's a place where no one goes. It's time to go there.

THE KENKO NANOTECH DISASTER

Kenko ("health") was a massive corporate conglomerate specializing in biotechnology and geoengineering. The company was a world-wide pioneer in the use of nanotech in the medical field, but their long-term goals were to use nanites as a part of large scale geoengineering projects, changing entire biomes to address the havoc caused by a worsening climate.

While their ideals were praise-worthy, their security and professionalism was not, resulting in the Nanotech Disaster (page 14): an experimental form of nanite was released outside Kenko's remote mountain lab, spreading uncontrollably, transforming living and nonliving matter. (This is the way history tells it today; it's possible some other cause altogether is to blame.)

Countless lives perished in the disaster and billions of credits were spent in the containment efforts. The entire government shifted gears into an emergency state, with the Nano-butai granted virtually unlimited authority to deal with the problem. No environmental disaster has ever reached the kind of scale seen in what later came to be called the Kuroi Yogore ("black stain"), and the land around it came to be known as **Meido** (page 34). Severe limits were placed on research concerning nanotechnology and geoengineering.

TEMPLE OF THE YAKUBYŌ GAMI

Today the nanotech facility serves as the main temple of the Yakubyō Gami plague spirits and a home base for their Roamers (page 236). No one else is allowed, and indeed, most wanderers avoid the place like the plague. There are two exceptions to this rule.

First are wanna-be Roamers. When one seeks to join the Roamers, the newcomer is sent to train in "temples" across the disaster area until they are ready to be initiated by the spirit masters themselves. The Roamer then travels to the nanotech facility ruins, where the Yakubyō Gami infect them with the broken nanites of the disaster zone, twisted by their own plague-based magics. When they exit the temple, the Roamers' leader **Nozawa Emiko** welcomes them to the fold. They then join the outlanders, spreading plague to "punish the wicked" of the wasteland – as judged according to the inhumane moral compass of the Yakubyō Gami.

The second is the Deactivation Unit (DU) of the Nano-butai. Led by **Teshima Osamu**, this group of two dozen or so specialists have been scouring the wastes for many years, operating under a government mandate to find and neu-

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tralize every last batch of nanobots. The more successful they've been, the more their funding has been cut, and Teshima decided it's time to set the DU's aim on the Kuroi Yogore itself while he still has some manpower. Technically, the place is rated "Beyond Recoverability", but you don't spend most of your adult life in the wastes of your own free will unless you're either committed or delusional. Teshima is a bit of both, and he has put the DU on a path that leads them into confrontation with the Yakubyō Gami, potentially robbing the wastes of their only lawgivers.

SALVAGE OPERATION

There is plenty of loot for the crew to dig up out of the debris and ashes in the Kenko ruins, if they are adept at scavenging and salvaging. The best and most valuable piece of salvage around is **the single remaining canister of pure nano gel**, which is at the Yakubyō Gami shrine (Boardroom). To get it, the crew will have to either assist the Roamers against the DU's incursion or destroy the kami with the DU's help (although the DU is unlikely to let them walk away with any nanotech). Or perhaps they just grab anything not bolted down and run away.

NANITE EXPOSURE

Once a PC has been exposed to nanites, you may give the character *itchy-skin-1* as a Consequence at any point, especially if some time passes. This status can be mitigated with appropriate protection, such as nano-resistant tech and clothing, and relevant Source-powered blessings and wards (such as those of the Yamabushi, page 275).

The symptom status can be **Restored** with appropriate care, but the infection cannot be cured without specialized nanotech or Source-touched care; in the presence of such advanced tools, removing the infection entirely requires a quick outcome, or an **Extra Feat** while **Restoring** the symptoms status. As long as they are infected, an infected PC may continue to be afflicted by the *itchy-skin-1* Consequence (or worse).

An untreated nanite infection can be lethal. At *itchy-skin-1*, the body begins to change at a molecular level, but its defenses are still holding strong. This status progresses to *bleeding-pores-2*, *mangled-limb-3*, *internal-bleeding-4*, *catatonic-5*, and *gooey-mess-6*.

HOOKS

- Toshio Saji, a trader in unlicensed tech, has made contact with the crew and offers to buy any useful tech they can scavenge from the wastes – the more powerful, the better – with special emphasis on the Kuroi Yogore. Saji has a reputation as a fair dealer, if a bit shady in terms of his associations. He approached the crew because of a rumor that the DU are on their way to the Kenko facility, to "ruin" this treasure trove for the likes of Saji. He does not candidly share this information with the crew, so as not to spook them off; the Nano-butai's slash-and-burn reputation precedes them.
- A friend or crew member becomes afflicted by a malady that cannot be treated, or a piece of land owned by the crew or a loved one is polluted beyond the point of no return. They come to learn there's a solution to these problems, which is unfortunately also the chief contributor for the Nanotech Disaster: the Kenko nano gel, capable of unparalleled feats of bio- and geoengineering. If any gel containers remain, they will be in the facility.
- One of the crewmembers seeks a new Source or to join the Roamers, or one of the crew has deep seated issues with the Roamers, after they killed a loved one who lives in the wastes.
- One of the crew members is a current or retired member of the Nano-butai and receives a call or distress signal from Teshima Osamu, as the latter is stomped in the face of the supernatural Yakubyō Gami and cannot hope to complete the decontamination of the Kuroi Yogore without a Sourcer's help.

LAYOUT

- Reaching The Ruins
  - » The Journey Through Meido
  - » Blackened Battlements
- Exploring The Ruins
  - » The Data Center
  - » The Domes
  - » The Spire
  - » The Boardroom

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REACHING THE RUINS

THE JOURNEY THROUGH MEIDO

A cataclysmic vista of mountains and valleys stretch out before you, twistedly painted in ash, soot, and blood red, making you think for a moment that you'd been transported into some hellish realm. But no, Meido is very much on Earth, a stark reminder of what technology can do when it is unleashed against nature, even inadvertently. Strange masses of organic life dot the mountainside, perhaps some kind of molecularly-transfigured trees, or wildlife. Clouds of toxic waste glide over the land. You stare at it all solemnly. Most of you have never seen anything like it.

MEIDO

LIMITS

TRAVERSE 3

TAGS & STATUSES

rough terrain, *acid rain*, *lake-sized ash deposits*, *stray nanites*, *scarce food or water*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The weather turns harsh, lightning strikes in the distance, and the sky churns and reddens*
» **Acid rains down (*acid-burns-4* to all unsheltered vehicles or persons)**

› *The road twists and turns unexpectedly, GPS stops working, a storm picks up*
» **Reaching a fuming chasm, the crew are forced to double back or find another path (Escalate the Situation or reduce two tiers from *traverse*; optionally, also *low-on-supplies-2* or *tired-3* to everyone)**

› *A chilling sensation runs through everyone when a corroded wayside shrine is revealed*
» **The crew inadvertently enters a place of foul spiritual energies (*misfortune-3* to everyone)**
» **A polluted kami rises from the ash deposits (Present A New Challenge: Kami, Wild Soul, page 108)**

› *A scout (human, drone, or spirit) appears in the distance and then promptly vanishes*
» **A wandering warband attacks the crew (Present a New Challenge: Nomadic Transport Caravans or Marauders, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 312)**
» **Scavengers steal supplies (burn up to four gear tags, inflict *low-on-supplies-2*, or Present a New Challenge: Scavenger, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 314)**

If this is the crew's first expedition into the wastes, they might not be aware of the dangers waiting out there. Actions taken to learn about the wastes can reveal the importance of environmental suits and preventative meds such as anti-rads and anti-fungal measures. Such actions can also reveal the existence of the Yakubyō Gami Roamers and their "Roamer Justice" (page 236), as they are considered to be the foremost threat – or bringers of order, depends on who you ask – in and around the Kuroi Yogore.

Depending on your cinematic considerations, you can play out the journey through Meido in a few ways:

- Fast forward the journey by simply describing it and then moving on to the encounter with the Yamabushi.
- Establish the journey scene and make a single Threat from the **Meido** Challenge profile. See how the PCs react and then potentially deliver one Consequence, before moving on.
- Ask the PCs for a quick outcome roll to reflect their travel. They must succeed in order to arrive. Deliver Consequences as needed from the Challenge profile.
- Play the travel scene as a complete tracked Challenge; the PCs arrive when they max out *traverse*.

YAMABUSHI ON THE ROAD

You come across a group of two dozen travelers walking single file towards what looks like an ancient line of small shrines along the ridgeline. While they are carrying weapons and equipment needed for surviving in the wastes, something about their demeanor seems elegant, even unearthly. They all seem to be wearing sashes adorned with bright-red pom-poms, a telltale sign of the mountain ascetics.

At a point of your choosing on the road to the Kuroi Yogore and the Kenko facility within, the crew come across wandering Yamabushi, led by an ancient monk named **Daichi**. He is courteous but cautious with strangers, presenting his group as "wanderers" and nothing more, since many in the Megacity covet the Yamabushi's magical secrets. He carefully asks why city folk are traveling so far from the Megacity. The monks *shun the Noise*, which affects every interaction by a character whose Noise themes are visible in any way. They appreciate honesty, and are willing to trade information if the crew shares their mission. If their trust is gained, they will reveal themselves as Yamabushi pilgrims who test themselves against the dangers of the wastes. They are able to survive due to special prayers they make to the kami and their strict purification regimes.

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Daichi warns the crew they are heading toward the land of the scavengers who are called Yakubyō Gami Roamers. He can provide them with basic information about the Roamers: How everyone in the wastes fear and respect them, how they can spread disease as retribution when someone crosses the laws of society. It is best, he believes, to keep one's distance from those who willingly serve plague demons.

The Yamabushi may be impressed if the crew indicate they're heading into the Kuroi Yogore, giving warnings but congratulating them on their bravery if they insist, and offering directions if the crew was lost. They will offer to make prayers to the kami on behalf of the crew. If the crew take them up on this, they are granted *protective-blessings-2* which protects them from nanotech attacks (see **Nanite Exposure**, page 274). If offended, likely by a PC showing disrespect or using technology on them in some way, they will not offer blessings or guidance.

THE BLACKENED BATTLEMENTS

> In the heart of the Kuroi Yogore lies a nameless mountain, upon which the Kenko Research Facility was built. Kilometers of wall surround the forbidden site, circling the mountain's base and blocking all access. Made out of military grade smart concrete and composite carbon steel, the walls are virtually indestructible. Every surface is covered with thick black ash, bearing the scars of the infamous disaster.
>
> And yet the fight is not done. Rising above the wall and surrounding this outer perimeter is a hazy cloud of nanites, hanging in the air, sparkling with activity.

As the crew comes closer to the walls of the site, the presence of the nanites becomes ubiquitous. A buzz fills the air, unending sparks fill the sky, and the tiny machine's presence can even be felt on the skin like an itch that grows in intensity until the flesh feels as if it's on fire.

Near the wall and all over the facility grounds, PCs are exposed to ambient clouds of nanites, some of whom may begin to attempt to transform the PCs. See **Nanite Exposure** (page 274).

AN ONGOING NANO-BATTLE

If the crew seeks more information, they can discover Nearspace data tags left by Tokyo's Nano-butai as well as discarded 3D fabricators bearing their seal. The nanotech cloud is in fact a miniscule battlefield, two sides in a constant fight: the Kenko nanobots against the Nano-butai's countering nanotech. The sparkles are microscopic electrical surges and reflections of high intensity laser-like weapons used by the tiny bots. Both sides routinely reinforce their forces by collecting miniscule debris from the air and assembling new copies, and are expected to wear themselves out only in several hundred years. As the nanites battle and destroy one another, they produce an ashy cloud that wafts off whenever the wind picks up.

PASSING THE WALL

Breaking the wall is virtually impossible, even with military grade explosives, as they have *reinforced-5* and a *destroy:5* Limit. The crew is likely to run out of ammo or get the **Kenko Boundary Security System** to trigger. Attempts to fly over the walls are resisted by the present nano swarm and require a roll with a hindering Scale 4 *nanite cloud*, with failure resulting in nanite exposure and a *gooey-mess-6* Consequence (**Nanite Exposure**, page 274).

The following ways to enter the zone can be discovered with an action, with a possible Consequence of triggering the Boundary Security due to snooping around. It might also be triggered by attempts to use the points of entry, particularly if the crew are not being stealthy.

- The most obvious entrance is a **large metal gate with giant "A1"** written on it in white, now smudged with ash. The gate can be opened by directly hacking the system's *hack:4* Limit, but it is *firewalled-2*. It's easier to just activate the gate hydraulics directly (*activate:2*). Logs can show that the gate was recently opened, after many years of inactivity, by Teshima Osamu, head of the Deactivation Unit.
- **A huge red tree**, horrifically transformed, has grown over and through a part of the wall, creating an access point through the nanite swarm. Its red bark appears to have veins which pump a kind of blood-like sap up to its crimson foliage. A character who climbs the tree to reach the other side of the wall will be hindered by its *sticky veins*. As a Consequence, the character may get *stuck-3*. The tree attempts to absorb all stuck characters into itself, causing *absorbed-into-tree-3*. To make this encounter longer and more dangerous, make this tree into a **Jubokko** (page 106).

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- The least obvious entrance is the one used by the Roamers to traffic in and out of the facility, a long dark **drainage passage**. They do not appreciate intruders, and as such, the tunnel is boobytrapped in three places. Traversing each of its sections safely – start, middle, and end – requires a careful pathfinding action with a quick outcome that can set off a trap as Consequences (walking through without heed sets off the Consequences anyway, as the Threat is implicit). The first trap is a spring trap that launches a metal spike at the target (*wounded-3*). The second is a pitfall trap leading into a pitch-black, filthy pit filled neck-high with toxic waste (*trapped-in-hole-4* and *sickened-4*). The third is a *magical-ward-3* made of dozens of strangely-greasy ofuda paper strips, repelling any who are not Touched by the Yakubyō Gami. As a Consequence, the ward can cause *blisters-3* to develop on a limb that attempts to touch it.

KENKO BOUNDARY SECURITY SYSTEM

- Surrounding the entire base of the Kenko Research Facility perimeter, the Boundary Security is a series of automated defenses meant to prevent entry. A joint operation between the Megacity and Kenko, the Boundary Security was one of the most advanced defense systems of the time.
- Neglect due to lack of funds and interest has caused the system to become unstable and arbitrary in its activities, sometimes coming down hard on intruders and other times utterly ignoring them.

KENKO BOUNDARY SECURITY SYSTEM

LIMITS

SNEAK PAST 2 | SHUTDOWN 2 | TAKE OVER –

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Flying drones pass by*

» **The drones see the crew (remove two tiers of *stealthy* or inflict *tagged-2*)**

» **Fire electric disruptor nets (*entangled-2* and *malfunctioning-2*) or shoot a dart (*paralyzed-2*)**

» **An alarm starts blaring, attracting either the Deactivation Unit or the Roamers, or both (Present a New Challenge, see pages 278 and 279 respectively)**

LOOT: SALVAGEABLE TECH

The nanite battleground around the wall still has some tech worth salvaging for those who know what to look for among the ruins.

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Guard E Military Surveillance Drones	Three small, spherical drones operating in concert. Fast and quiet, the Guard Es use a sophisticated array of sensors and clever maneuvering to locate potential threats.	***surveillance drone trio***, *long term automated operation*, *maneuverable*, *pierce through camouflage*	*Mythic illusions*
Daido Corp Crowd Control Net Gun	Used as a non-lethal deterrent, the crowd control net guns release a fine woven glass-steel composite to entangle crowds and pacify through neural disruption. Those caught in the web lose motor control.	***net gun***, *entangle human-sized targets*, *neural disruption*, *cyberware disruption*	*difficult reload*
Kenko Pulse Generator	A tall, black spike with several silver disks, the Kenko Pulse Generator disrupts the ability of nanotech to operate within the assigned radius. It was these disruptors that allowed the disaster to be contained.	***anti-nanotech pulse generator***, *battery-draining super-pulse*, *target nanites of a specific type*, *extra battery*	*slow to charge*

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EXPLORING THE RUINS

Once past the walls, the crew can move around freely. Old roads, power and data cables, drain ditches, and maintenance shacks can be found everywhere.

All of the facility's buildings can be clearly seen on the mountain's side: Closest is the Data Center, but it's simple enough to get to the Domes, and Spire. Reaching the Boardroom requires going through the Spire.

At any of these locations, or while transitioning between them, you could place one of the following two encounters.

ENCOUNTERING THE DEACTIVATION UNIT

> Hazmat-suited government employees, the DU are putting in long hours to save the Megacity from a decades long nanotech threat. All wear protective hoods, but their weary, furrowed faces can be seen through clear plastic and their cracking voices are transmitted through integrated speaker systems. Some have makeshift, dirty talismans attached to their suits.
>
> The members of the Deactivation Unit know their role is crucial and are also aware of how dangerous it is. Most of them just want to do their job and go home, but they're insistent on making sure this thankless work is finished.

The Deactivation Unit has already arrived and is trying their best to root out whatever is causing the nanites to continue to spawn here. The 24 member team (Scale 2) is led by **Teshima Osamu**, a middle-aged man highly driven to succeed here and finish his life's work of cleansing the wastes. He and many in his team have lost loved ones in the disaster and feel strongly about eradicating nanotech.

Teshima and his people have been scouring the wastes for long enough to know that something unusual is going on. Far enough from the Noise of the Megacity, they came to realize that some superstitions held by the wanderers and scavengers have true power, that hold back some malicious force that supports the nanite plague and diseases in general. They have adopted some prayers and fashioned some protective talismans, but they don't truly know how to face yōkai, and their methods of attacking the issue are entirely technical. They simply spray nanite-killing gasses from the hoses of their hazmat suits and wonder why it's not working.

NEGOTIATING WITH THE DU

Given his predicament, Teshima is willing to work with the crew if they have similar interests in clearing out the site, even if they have no official authorization to be here. He's even willing to let the PCs scavenge technology so long as they're not taking any nanotech with them. If Teshima thinks their intention is to leave with nanites of any kind (including the unprogrammed gel that's up in the Spire) he and the other decontaminators gain *suspicious-3* and ask the crew to leave the facility. Unless a special arrangement is reached, the DU will fight the crew for any remaining nanotech, perhaps even to the death.

NANO-BUTAI DECONTAMINATOR

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3

TAGS & STATUSES

reinforced hazmat suit, *officer of the law*, *determined-2*, *firewalled-2*, *minor-ward-1*, *nano-shielded-4*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Raise their spray nozzles at a target*
» **Spray nanite-killing, electricity-disrupting chemicals (*malfunctioning-3* or burn a cyberware or nanite tag, and create *chemical cloud*)**

› *Move into a chemical cloud*
» **Become obscured (gain *hidden-2*)**

› *Press several buttons on their wrist band as they move around*
» **Locate a hidden target with their scout drones (Escalate The Situation and remove three tiers of *stealthy* or *hidden*)**
» **Communicate with the rest of the group and maneuver to position (gain *cover-2* or inflict *surrounded-2*)**

› *Draw a heavy-duty taser or a gun*
» **Shoot at a target (*stunned-3* or *gun-shot-3*)**

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ENCOUNTERING THE ROAMERS

> As quiet as a plague, a few of the notorious Roamers creep closer, accompanied by a nearly inaudible high-pitched whirr. Beneath their armored brown dusters and filthy goggles, their sickly bare skin writhe and bubble as waves of transformations wash over their bodies, and it then dawns on you that they are walking biomes, radically altered by the disaster and hell-knows-what-else. They glare at you with judgmental expressions, while holding their firearms close.

The **Yakubyō Gami Roamers** (page 237) treat the former corporate research center as a main temple. The blessing of the Yakubyō Gami spirits, embedded in the nanites injected in them, allows them to survive without harm in this otherwise hazardous area. They are protected from most diseases and signs of aging by the magic and nanotech combined, ironically fulfilling the original mission that Kenko set out to accomplish.

The Roamers are aware of the DU entering their temple grounds, but they themselves only number thirty, and DU are especially protected against their best form of attack – inflicting disease and nano-plagues.

To represent the Roamers, use the Challenge profile on page 237. Roamers are immune to all disease and nano effects as long as the Yakubyō Gami (page 284) they serve have not been banished. In addition, while at the Kuroi Yogore, all Roamers are also physically *shielded-by-nanites-1* and mystically *warded-1*. At your option, whenever the Roamers deliver a nanotech- or sickness-related status, it may stack with any status a PC already gained from **Nanite Exposure** (page 274).

PATROLLING ROAMERS

The Roamers can be found throughout the facility in the form of scouting parties patrolling the area. As a Threat or a Consequence, a Roamer scout might see the crew and promptly retreat to avoid contact. They'll gather a group of at least eight (Scale 1), led by **Mōjin** ("the blind man"), a foul-spirited man and one of the close advisors of their leader, **Nozawa Emiko**. They will go in search of the PCs and demand that they leave, with threats of violence. One of the Roamers will whisper to Mōjin that the PCs don't wear the same suits as the DU; if the PCs press on this, and reduce Mōjin's *suspicious-3* (or override it with *threatened-4*!), the Roamers could decide to take them to see Nozawa Emiko. She is deep within the facility, up in the Boardroom.

To add a layer of complexity, Mōjin might decide the PCs need to be tested or purified before they can be allowed in the hallowed ground of the Boardroom. He'll take them to the Domes, where each PC must pass through at least one dome and survive.

ROAMERS IN DAILY ACTIVITIES

As they explore the ruins, the PCs might also encounter Roamers who are engaged in different tasks. Some of the Roamers might be performing ritualistic preparation in one of the Domes or in the Spire, while others gather in parties before leaving to pass judgment on nearby settlements, most likely near the mouth of the drainage passage through the perimeter wall (Blackened Battlements) – even with the DU invasion, their duty as judges remains.

LOOT: AROUND THE RUINS

Hastily abandoned, the ruins of the Kenko facility hold many treasures beneath their mounds of ashen nano-waste and strange flora overgrowth.

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Kenko Bio-Agent Printer	Roughly the size of a large suitcase, the Kenko Bio Printer allows for the synthesis of any number of helpful or harmful bio-agents and pharmaceuticals.	***bio-agent printer***, *medication synthesis*, *physical enhancement cocktails*, *forensic science assist*	*expensive reagents*
Kenko Nanite Dart Gun	This small side arm was designed for subduing uncontrolled animal test subjects, but can be used for riot control. It fires small darts that shatter on impact and deploy nanties that cause the target to fall unconscious.	***nanite dart gun***, *enough to knock out an elephant*, *targets with standard biology*, *silent*	*pre-programmed nanobots*
Gyeong Motors V-250c Hover Car	Executives and managers used these jet-assisted hovercrafts to travel around the mountain stronghold and beyond. The fast, all-terrain vehicle was designed for all weather conditions, making it ideal for the wastes.	***executive hover car***, *hover over difficult terrain*, *instant acceleration*, *protective interior*	*twitchy handling*

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THE DATA CENTER

> The Kenko data center sits at the base of the mountain, half a kilometer away from the wall. A depressing example of the style of architecture that was common some decades ago, emphasizing self-sufficiency and restraint, the data center is an array of windowless buildings of gray concrete, connected by corridors in a ring. As you approach, you discern beyond the broken front doors a haunted expanse of servers and mainframe computers covered in black dust.

The data center was the information hub for Kenko's multinational effort. All economic and scientific data produced and collected by the company and its partners was stored and analyzed at the center. Solar panels keep the lights going and some of the servers operational, but there's no network connection with the outside world.

Inside, at first it appears that there are no human remains, just the personal effects left by workers that serve as a haunting preservation of work culture at that time. However, under the layers of black nanite ash are clothes filled with yet more black ash that are the final remains of workers utterly consumed by the nanites they unleashed. All evidence suggests the building was evacuated with very little warning, and has seen little activity since. The Roamers avoid the data center, it means little to them.

Most of the data center's equipment remains. If the crew could access the system and bypass the *firewall-3* they could download valuable information; if they simply grab storage devices whole cloth, the data is *encrypted-3* and there's a good chance the particular storage device they picked won't hold anything interesting.

DATA FROM THE CENTER

- *Kenko bioengineering research data*, kept secret from the public. Many corporations, especially in the medical and pharmaceutical field (such as Soma Medical, page 192), would kill for any substantial portion of Kenko's research.
- *Damning reports* that suggest that the government was fully aware of the geo-engineering project and its significant risks.
- A final query in the system before all operations shut down, requesting the location and status of the four cylinders of raw, un-programmed nano gel. The unread reply indicates that three were emptied the day of the disaster, but that the fourth cylinder was sent to the executives in the Boardroom, inside the Spire.

THE DOMES

> Four interconnected domes cover the mountain's slope like mushroom caps. Using the most advanced systems in agricultural informatics, 3D fabrication, and automated hydroponics, the domes were said to be able to replicate any environment found on Earth, in order to study and develop nanotech solutions fitting its climate.

In the time since the accident, the environments inside the domes have become truly wild. The unchecked power of the nanites and the preserving power of the domes' environmental algorithms facilitated the creation of dangerous new ecosystems. Plants that spray clouds of digestive enzymes capable of dissolving organic tissues; insects that are too large, or combine traits of several different species; chitinous blades of grass that follow the direction of animals that walk by.

Each dome has its own dangers. The Roamers can sometimes be found here, as they use the domes to test themselves, harvest materials, and for meditation.

DOME ONE: TROPICAL RAINFOREST

This dome has a broken roof, and the thick humidity within escapes out into the world as trails of mist. The dome is full of dying tropical trees that have become melded together with exotic birds. The trees thus sprout colorful feathers and screech in horror. The ground is dangerous here, as the surprisingly strong *claw-like roots* of the dying trees can grasp at intruders (*rooted-3*) and eventually try to squish the body into fertilizer (*squished-3*).

DOME TWO: THE CAVE

An artificial cave environment constructed from laser-cut stone. The wet walls are covered in phosphorescent fungal life, giving the dome a blue-green glow. The environment smells terribly, but despite appearances, nothing here is actually toxic. Characters who spend more than a few minutes breathing in the air here take *glowing-organs-3* as their very bodies become light sources. If the status is not removed within a day the effect becomes long-lasting and the character replaces it with a story tag *glowing organs*.

DOME THREE: THE PANDA RESERVES

What was once a calm environment of stone, dirt, grass, and bamboo is now overgrown to the point of impassability. Hiding in the grass are red-haired **Mutant Red Pandas**, growling at the crew.

Once a symbol of cute fun, these dog-sized creatures have turned deadly. Beneath a sweet exterior they hide long

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piercing claws, venomous barbed tails, and an uncanny level of intelligence, which have made these mutants the top of the dome's new food chain.

DOME FOUR: THE LAKE

A polluted lake takes up the bulk of the space in this dome. The waters are murky with the ash of destroyed nanites, but it quickly becomes clear that something swims under the surface. Probing the lake or even standing close to it for too long will provoke the mutated **Giant Koi Fish** inside. The Koi Fish is beautiful, but humongous in size – large enough to swallow a person whole.

THE CONTROL CHAMBER

The Lake Dome holds the environmental controls for all of them, in a hidden chamber at the back. Finding and opening the sealed-off control chamber requires an action.

Inside the chamber, all the processes of the environmental systems can be monitored from an independent network setup exclusive to the Domes. Hacking this system (*firewalled-2*) reveals that the nanotech disaster began in Dome One, an accident caused by a sanctioned experiment where the nano gel was programmed and introduced to the environment to test its capacity to rewrite an ecosystem. When the nanites got out of hand, the scientists attempted to use the Dome's systems to stop the nanites, but this only spread them further. This caused the release of the second and third cylinders of nano gel, but not the fourth, which was sent to somewhere in the Spire.

MUTANT RED PANDA

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 3

TAGS & STATUSES

cunning, *cute*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Raise tail up threateningly*
» **Spray venomous barbed quills (*necrosis-3* to everyone in the area)**

› *Scurry up a tree*
» **Leap onto a target's face and grab tight (*clawed-2* and *red-panda-on-face-3*)**

› *Bark and squeal cutely*
» **More red pandas appear from a hidden grotto (increase Scale by one)**
» **The pandas employ clever pack tactics to close in on their prey (*cornered-3*) or gain a *superior-position-2***

GIANT KOI FISH

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 5

TAGS & STATUSES

murky water, *lucky-1*, Scale 2

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *A shadow appears in the water of the murky lake, getting closer*
» **Slap a target on the shore with its tail, knocking them into the water (*knocked-back-4* and if any tier remains, the target falls into the water)**

› *Dramatically jump out of the water, high into the air*
» **Land on a target, swallowing them (*swallowed-3*)**

› *Leap towards someone carrying a big weapon*
» **Swallow the target's weapon (burn two tags)**

THE SPIRE

This glass and steel tower, rising next to the mountain's peak, was once the global headquarters of Kenko, a symbol of the power and reach of the corporation. As you look upon it today, it symbolizes the reverse: the folly, hubris, and filth of humanity. Its current tenants, both nanite and human, have transformed its interior such that it bears only surface resemblance to the hey-day of Kenko. The walls are part-broken, part-digested; rusting furniture is stacked in piles; dirty nets full of salvage hang everywhere; mounds of nano-waste ash cover the floors. And yet the Roamers have made this place feel like a true temple: They have transformed the tower into a monastery to their dark kami.

The Spire is the headquarters of former Kenko, converted into the Roamers' central temple: Offices have become isolation cells, conference rooms have become training dojos or barracks, and the halls are packed full of scavenged supplies from around the wastes.

If the crew attack the Spire, movement through it will require completing the **Up the Spire** Challenge. The Threats can also be used as inspiration if the crew were invited in but dig around in places they aren't allowed to access.

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UP THE SPIRE

LIMITS

TRAVERSE 4

TAGS & STATUSES

it's like a maze in here, *rundown headquarters*, *warded-2*, *shadowy-1*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Minor air movements are caught in a single ray of sunlight, or a dead rat is found in the corner*
» **The PCs inhale the sickness in this room (*sickened-3* to all, which may treated as Nanite Exposure, page 274)**

› *An air of overbearing malice is increasingly felt by all those present in the room*
» **Some otherworldly force strikes at whatever is protecting the PC from nanites (burn appropriate gear, tech, or Mythic tag)**

› *Delicate calligraphy covers the walls and floor of the passageway ahead*
» **The wards remove magical effects and create a stomach bug (burn Mythic tags, remove two tiers of beneficial Mythic statuses, and gain *queasy-1*)**

› *The way forward is blocked by partially collapsed and disintegrated debris*
» **The crew must find a different path (remove a tier from *traverse*)**
» **A group of Roamers corner the crew and demand to know what they're doing here (Present a New Challenge: Roamers)**

LOOT: THE SPIRE

While scavenging or as a gift from the Roamers, the crew can find the following loot catalog items.

General Tags: *abandoned biotech equipment*, *makeshift net gun*, *rations and water*, *reagent vats*, *Roamer infected staff*, *stolen Meido Relics*, *winch*

ITEM NAME	DESCRIPTION	FEATURE TAGS	WEAKNESS
Kenko Security Service Armor	Kenko's security division developed its own style of personal armor, integrating a biogel inner layer that provides instant first aid at the point of trauma, accelerating healing and numbing pain.	***biogel armor***, *pain numbing*, *burn treatment*, *chemically enhanced endurance*	*chemical fatigue*
Scavenger Grapple-Ladder Launcher	Made from scavenged materials, this unusual device is wide but light, launching a jet-assisted grappler drone that hooks and locks onto almost any surface. It then releases a collapsible ladder to allow for easy climbing.	***scavenger grapple-ladder launcher***, *slippery or uneven surfaces*, *easy to climb ladder*, *made for creative usage*	*wide and unwieldy*
Kenko "Learned Sage" Nano-Sensitive Scanner	This cutting-edge handheld device from Kenko packs the most advanced pre-anti-nano-regulation nanite detection and analysis tech. It's worth a small fortune on the black market although technically it is not nanotech and therefore is not illegal *per se*.	***nano-sensitive scanner***, *identify nanite spec*, *read nano signatures & comms*, *extrapolate current programming*	*coveted tech*
Curse of Pestilence	Practitioners of appropriate forms of Esoterica can learn this curse from a Roamer or from the Yakubyō Gami themselves. It conjures a tainted nanite swarm that promptly infects the target, causing a range of maladies that could lead to a gruesome death.	***curse of pestilence***, *corrode protective gear*, *debilitating sickness*, *rapid tissue breakdown*	*purification wards*

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THE BOARDROOM

> At the top of the spire, you find a sharp peaked room surrounded on all sides by shattered glass windows, commanding a view worthy of those who would rule the world – or so they thought. At this height, the boardroom should have been buffeted by powerful gusts, but instead the atmosphere here is still and dreary, heavy with the panoramic views of empty land, ravaged by disaster. Upon the once-plush stone conference table, now grimey and covered with stolen and defiled relics from across Meido, a priestess of the Roamers is prostrating herself in prayer to her vile gods. Something malign moves through the stale air. Suddenly, you feel the urge to vomit.

The Roamers have torn away the corporate art and technology that used to furnish this room. Reformed as a place of worship, silk hangings and other shrine treasures decorate the main shrine for the Yakubyō Gami. Knowledgeable persons might recognize some of these as cultural objects of great importance from days gone by, belonging to the worship of other kami. It is clear that the Roamers are willing to plunder sacred places from around the wastes for their spirit masters. Behind the stone table in the room is a heavy sealed case marked with a litany of warnings, in which is the only remaining container of unprogrammed nanites dating from the original days of Kenko (see sidebar).

Kneeling in prayer upon the long stone boardroom table is **Nozawa Emiko**, the leader of the Roamers. She wears tattered wasteland clothes with heavy dust goggles hung around her neck. As the crew enters, she remains kneeling up on the table.

A haze ripples in the middle of the room, and a cold breeze blows through as if standing on the tall peak of a mountain; it is in fact coming from the shima (kami islands, page 33) the Yakubyō Gami inhibit, beyond little cracks in reality; in a few years, this will be a proper Thin Place. The kami themselves are not here, but their mystical presence is, allowing the Roamers and the crew to interact with them.

Unless the crew have never committed a transgression against someone else (an unlikely event given their mercenary professions), the Yakubyō Gami grow *restless-2* and demand Nozawa banish them from their presence. This happens even if they are accompanied by Mōjin, and even if he had them go through a purification ritual – the kami suffer no evil in their presence.

What happens next depends on what the crew is here to do:

- If the crew wants to get the nano gel from Nozawa she is apprehensive, knowing full well what an incredible bargaining chip it is. She can be swayed if the crew proves themselves trustworthy and willing to take action. Nozawa asks them to do a job for her: infect an elusive target that's out of reach for the Roamers (an important figure who escaped to the Megacity) or deactivate the defenses of a wastelands settlement that shored themselves up against the Roamers. At the end of that job, she delivers the nano gel to the crew and possibly invites them to join the Roamers.
- If the crew is here with Teshima Osamu, or unwilling to help the Roamers, they must fight their way to the nano gel case or steal it from under the Yakubyō Gami noses. The kami's presence is pervading the room, but their attention is limited – a big distraction can give someone a chance to slip by and grab the case.

THE LAST NANO GEL CANISTER

A suspension of nanites in a programmable gel, the contents of the last nano-gel canister is a super-agent capable of incredible acts of transformation. In the hands of a capable scientist or tinkerer, it can perform nothing short of miracles – or horrors.

Rather than representing it with Effects, treat this last canister as a plot device. Not only can it be used to drive a major transformation directly, but it can also be traded for virtually anything, making it a golden ticket to any single thing, person, or service the PCs wish for, albeit not without complications.

Unfortunately, as the Tokyo Megacity has learned the hard way, deploying nanites can often backfire. If you still want to roll for the outcome, use **Going Out In A Blaze**. Or, if the Threat of nanotech has been made sufficiently clear during this job, you can simply deliver the Consequences when the PCs use the nano gel to **Make The Future Bleaker**, or worse.

There is also the issue of the Nano-butai coming after whoever possesses or even previously handled the canister. This time it won't be Teshima Osamu's world-weary outland team, but the Megacity's Nano-butai, who are more concerned with holding power than actually stopping the spread of dangerous nanotech. You can use Challenges such as the Nano-butai Trooper (page 128) as well as a wide range of tanks, drones, weapon platforms, and all the armaments government money can buy.

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THE YAKUBYŌ GAMI

The Yakubyō Gami are spirits of pestilence and disease. They come in many kinds and shapes, and would usually travel the world and inflict sorrow and woe on anyone who transgressed on social norms, but currently most of them are inside a kami island that Touches the Boardroom.

The Yakubyō Gami have traditionally taken on the role of judges, doling out punishment to those who behave wickedly, but as inhuman kami, they have little concern for circumstance or mortals' obsession with fairness. In the wake of the Nanotech Disaster, they were drawn to the Spire, to the death and corruption that permeated the area. The shrine built by the Roamers has only strengthened their hold in the mortal world, but they seem content not to venture out themselves, instead letting the Roamers be their agents in this new world.

The Yakubyō Gami Challenge represents the mystical presence of the Yakubyō Gami in the Boardroom, inhabiting the nanotech in the air. Technologies that fight nanotechnology are therefore effective against them, and count on the same Limit as *banish*. To face the kami fully, one would need to find a way to enter their shima or coax them out of it, and then come to blows with some of the most feared kami in Japanese history – beyond being somewhat detrimental to one's health, it is also beyond the scope of this job.

YAKUBYŌ GAMI

LIMITS

BANISH 5

TAGS & STATUSES

kami of pestilence, *mystically-entrenched-3*, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Icy fog from the spirit world rolls in*
- » **Invoke feelings of guilt for past acts (*guilt-ridden-3*)**
- » **Inflict visions of the target suffering from the disease or ailment that terrifies them most (*terrified-4*)**

› *Sparkles in the air indicate nanites are on the move*
- » **The nanites infect someone's limb (*rotting-limb-4*)**
- » **The nanties descend on a piece of gear with carbon or biological parts and ruin it (burn a tag)**

› *Nozawa Emiko falls on her knees, eyes wide*
- » **Nanites leave Nozawa Emiko as the Yakubyō Gami take her life force to reinforce their presence (remove three tiers from *banish* and deal *drained-2* to Emiko)**

NOZAWA EMIKO

The leader of the Yakubyō Gami Roamers, Nozawa is a hardcore survivor who cares greatly for her people. She used to consider herself a cynic, but after committing the Roamers to the Yakubyō Gami – originally out of desperation and opportunism – she grew to accept her role as law bringer, and to appreciate and even revere the guidance of the disease spirits.

Now seeing herself as a devoted servant of justice, Nozawa has found dignity and purpose as judge and jury in the name of the pestilence kami. She carries an air of authority around her, and is willing to negotiate with the crew if they have something she wants. She believes the Roamers are nothing less than the moral core upon which the entire Meido rests, and that while the Yakubyō Gami aren't necessarily always correct, it's better to adhere to their demands than to have the alternative – unending chaos.

Nozawa can bring swift and terrible death with her makeshift spear, dipped in toxic waste.

NOZAWA EMIKO

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 **PERSUADE 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

makeshift Roamer armor, *grim*, *shielded-by-nanites-2*, *true-believer-4*, *warded-2*

SPECIALS

HARBINGER OF DISEASE: Touching or attacking Nozawa at close range inflicts *coughing-2*, *fever-2*, or *shaking-2*.

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Grip her makeshift spear tightly*
- » **Expertly stab with her makeshift spear (*cut-up-3* and *septic-wound-2*)**

› *Furrow her brow in grim determination*
- » **Give a final, harrowing warning of coming death (*intimidated-3*)**
- » **Convince someone that the Yakubyō Gami are what's holding Meido together or the only way to truly control nanotech (*hesitant-2* or *listening-2*)**

› *Call upon the spirits of pestilence to aid her*
- » **Cast a plague upon a target (*sickness-3*)**
- » **Utter a prayer for the nanite cloud to repair itself (gain *shielded-by-nanites-2*) or the Roamers (remove up to 3 tiers of harm statuses)**

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AFTERMATH

If the crew successfully banishes the Yakubyō Gami or kills Nozawa Emiko, the Roamers will disperse, losing their immunity to nano tech and the power to release nanite plagues. With no yōkai present to maintain the nano plague, it will finally be possible for Teshima Osamu to clear the facility grounds from the remaining nanobots, and possibly even make this place of wonder into a haven for the people of the wastes. Over weeks and months, he manages to get the support he needs, and turns the Kenko Research Facility into a fortress of the Nano-butai.

Any Roamers who survive will certainly hold a grudge against the crew. They might go to greater, possibly desperate lengths, to try to summon the Yakubyō Gami again, or find some other yōkai Source to commit themselves to, as part of a sacred quest to kill the blasphemers who destroyed their temple.

Without the Roamers, travel in the waste will become more difficult, as the already-lawless lands become even more rife with bandits, and Key Players who previously wouldn't head out of the Megacity for fear of confrontation with the Roamers can now brave the wilds. The crew, in any case, are likely to develop a reputation as saviors of the wastes, and will find it easy to find guides and hospitality.

If the crew work with Nozawa, gaining the trust of the Roamers, their reputation among the other communities in the wastes is seriously harmed. Similarly, if the crew finds a way to drive off the Yakubyō Gami and negotiate with Nozawa, the Roamers inevitably find a way to resurrect their pestilence gods and when the wastelands are attacked again, many blame the crew.

And what of the final canister of unprogrammed nano gel – an artifact that could change the future of the Megacity? Did the PCs keep it or destroy it? Did they give it to Teshima Osamu and the Deactivation Unit? If so, can the high-ranking officials of the Nano Butai resist the temptation of such power?



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STEAM PUNKS

Things get hot in the bathhouse



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BACKGROUND

The Yuna were originally just a street gang of delinquents, their town's equivalent of a bōsōzoku (page 28), trading in drugs and committing petty theft. As they grew in ambition and upgraded to smuggling, they took over a dilapidated sentō in their turf and put cash into renovating it into a nightclub, creating their own criminal headquarters and hangout.

It still has hot water baths in communal pools, but now the place is lit only with neon and its halls are filled with club music blasting loud, protecting the criminals inside from cybernetic ears that might pick up on their dealings.

In order to accomplish these changes, the Yuna were forced to bargain with a somewhat dangerous yōkai that inhabits a small shrine hidden within the sentō – a **mizuchi** (water dragon/serpent). It made itself known to the leader of the Yuna, **Kobayashi Tomoko**, who agreed to allow the mizuchi access to their customers – so it could drain the life energy from them – so long as it acted with subtlety and did not make itself seen. The mizuchi agreed, and must now remain in its shrine, kill no visitors, and speak only in whispers. Tomoko agreed in the name of all the Yuna, to not discuss the mizuchi with others and to leave it be.

The club became popular and business has gone up as the gang has become more successful in their smuggling operations. This attracted the attention of black market rivals – namely the Ghost Market. They contacted the Yuna gang, suggesting that they have a chat over business, an invitation that felt more like a threat. The Yuna reluctantly agreed. With little time to plan, they reached out to the PC crew as hired mercs, to serve as muscle and help them in dealing with the Ghost Market middle managers.

JOB BRIEFING

The infamously exclusive **Ghost Market (page 159)**, the Megacity's roving AR black market, has come to a nearby neighborhood and you've been invited... to work. Your job is to act as facilitators for what will likely be a tense negotiation between a small-time syndicate and the much more established Ghost Market elite.

Your employers are a smuggler gang called the **Yuna** ("bathhouse girls"), a female-led operation that trades in smuggled weapons and stolen pharmaceuticals out of their sentō (page 37) which has been converted into a stylish night club. They've called you to act both as negotiators and as backup muscle to help them during a meeting with Ghost Market leaders to determine their future in the larger Tokyo underworld. Your job will be successful if you can make sure the Yuna remain unharmed, and come out of their negotiations on top.

Your contact is a Yuna named **Choko**, who has asked that you come to the sentō before the meeting. Rumor has it that the bathhouse is haunted by a kami or yōkai, which could complicate the negotiations – especially since it's unclear if the gang is even aware of the possible danger.

THE YUNA GANG

The Yuna use the Bōsōzoku Rider profile (page 124). They all wear the gang's color, a distinctive shade of yellow-green neon, usually over their cyberware. All Yuna are under a magical binding which keeps them from talking about the mizuchi with outsiders or directly betraying it. This takes the form of a *serpent-promise-6* status. Yuna members who are deep in the Noise, as most of them are, simply talk around the subject, changing conversation topics without realizing they're doing it.

The crew's contact is **Choko** (a cup for serving saké), who no longer uses her real name, Nagasawa Jun, since she left her birth family on bad terms. Young and brash, Choko isn't stupid, but she's easily distracted, constantly monitoring her AR feed, occasionally sending messages, or watching some vid. Choko wears a holographic dress that floats about her, projected from her mostly aesthetic cyberware, and wears on her shoulder a face mask identical in shape to that of a famous Kawaii Mask Streamer (page 232), which she "watches ironically".

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Kobayashi Tomoko is the Yuna leader, a 30-something woman with a clearly botched bio-hair implant that makes her look as if she has a dirty mane, yet she wears it with pride, as if urging people to ask about it. Formerly a test subject for hire, a job just as terrible as it sounds, Tomoko joined the Yuna when she could no longer stand having other people control her and her body. She became the Yuna leader through ambition mixed with willingness to compromise; she cares too much for her girls to allow them to keep being a small-time nuisance in some neglected part of town.

Tomoko is absent at the beginning of the night. In an attempt to appear more impressive she upgraded her cyberware earlier that day, but the process had some complications. She appears only when the deal is almost closed, on heavy painkillers.

WAIT, WHAT'S THE GHOST MARKET?

If your group hasn't played through *A Bridge Too Far* (page 296) and haven't encountered the Ghost Market in the past, they might need to learn about it first, possibly by asking contacts or searching online. They can also ask the Yuna to arrange for them a provisional, one-time invitation to the Market. By doing this, the crew's reputation becomes entwined with the Yuna – should the Yuna be accepted into the Market, the crew is welcome to attend in the future. Otherwise... well, better do something that *really* impresses the Market's overseers.

HOOKS

- One of the crew's close friends is a member of the Yuna, directly connected to them, or benefits from their rising success. Once the Yuna get the Ghost Market's semi-ultimatum, this contact approaches the crew and offers to connect them with the Yuna.
- The Yuna have worked with the crew before, perhaps they provided some useful loadout items in the past. Now that they're feeling they're in over their heads with the Ghost Market, they contact the crew and ask for help, in exchange for future discounts and favors.
- The crew are known for being good negotiators or facilitators, thanks to how they handled a previous job or due to the reputation of one of them. Even "pretty good" is good enough for the Yuna, who feel they need an outsider's help in the negotiations.

LAYOUT

- The Neighborhood
- Entrance to the Sentō Club
- The Washrooms
- The Baths
- The Hidden Shrine
- The Back Rooms

THE NIGHT'S ITINERARY

- Seiryu Arrives
- The Enforcers Arrive
- The Negotiations

BOTCHED DIPLOMACY

Ensuring that the meeting between the Yuna smugglers and the Ghost Market reps goes well is the primary responsibility of the crew. They must walk a fine line here, as they are expected to serve as muscle and protect the Yuna, but they must also keep from letting a fight break out. Should they fail the latter task, they risk the diplomatic overtures going sour, which harms their own reputation and imperils the summit.

During the evening, track the *botched-diplomacy* status, which the whole crew shares. It hinders their interactions with members of the Ghost Market, and therefore has a direct effect on the final steps of the negotiation. At tier 5, the crew is no longer allowed to participate directly in the negotiations, although they can still advise the Yuna or employ some secret shenanigans. At tier 6, the crew fails the Yuna and are dismissed from the job.

This status has a potential to show up at a number of points during the job. Impose *botched-diplomacy-1* on the crew if the PCs flout security, try to bring weapons into the baths, or otherwise cause trouble rather than stop it. Acts of deference, de-escalating violence, or finding middle ground might reduce it. Much of the latter part of the job, during the negotiation itself, requires the crew to avoid getting this status while also finding ways to reduce it.

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THE SENTO AND NEIGHBORHOOD

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

This older neighborhood has seen better days. Graffiti covers nearly every flat surface and the stench of garbage fills the air. Giant open-air reservoirs, once part of a sprawling drainage system, are now filled with mountains of garbage where birds nest. It seems like many years ago the monsoons, much like most of the people, decided to move to other parts of the Megacity.

A jumble of cables above you connects between the buildings on both sides of the streets – electricity and cyberspace flowing above, while you can hear the sewage running not too far behind some alley. This is what a neighborhood looks like when criminal gangs take over municipal operations.

Every corner has a liquor store, gun store, or pawn shop and it's hard to miss the sizable homeless population in the alleyways. Even though some buildings stand deserted, squatters avoid them, as they might not keep standing for much longer.

The Yuna girls would appear to be more focused on their criminal enterprises and their sentō club than on community relations.

As the crew make their way through the neighborhood, their contact **Choko** calls and catches up with them in one of the alleys. She's dressed in her gang's color – a shade of yellow-green neon. Even her cybernetics have sizable plastic parts in these colors, and the graffiti on every building corner echoes the motif. It should be clear that despite being alone, with strangers, in the middle of a dark alley – Choko feels safe. The Yuna own this neighborhood.

Choko gives a respectable bow and asks the crew to join her at an outdoor table in front of a tea shop. She pays respect to a small shrine next to the entrance, then waves at the waiter to order the shop's famous ice tea for everyone, telling him to put it on the Yuna's tab. His demeanor reveals that there's no such thing, yet he says nothing.

HAPHAZARD BRIEFING

Choko suggests the crew be on the lookout for the Ghost Market's envoy, a woman named **Seiryū** who is supposed to be coming before the main negotiator to ensure everything is going smoothly. A PC who has some familiarity with the Ghost Market might know (or **Discover**) that Seiryū is a very dangerous individual – as befitting the public face of the dreaded Ghost Market – and Choko doesn't show enough respect when mentioning her.

Choko can answer any major questions the PCs have. If they ask her about the yōkai that is rumored to inhabit the sentō, she will snort and deny anything mythic going on there. Too deep in the Noise, she is unaware of the spirit and shows open bemusement if any PC seems to take the rumor seriously. However, even though she doesn't realize it, she is still under the effect of the magical binding. She is unable to talk about the Hidden Shrine, even though she suspects Tomoko hides some secret there.

PLANNING THE NEGOTIATIONS

The PCs will likely want to figure out where in the club is best to set up the meeting. Choko has no map to give them ("Why do you need a map? It's three baths and some rooms") and suggests to hold the meeting in the Baths ("It's our *thing*, they're gonna love it!"), despite it being full of club goers and full of loud music; Choko sees these as added layers of security. Other options include the Backrooms and the Hidden Shrine (should the crew discover it).

Regarding security measures, the site has a few Yuna bouncers, but that's about it. Most Yuna have cybernetics and the skills to defend themselves if a fight goes down, but they're hoping the PCs will be their main muscle. Choko believes Kobayashi Tomoko will grant the PCs access to the club's cyberspace Domain and all security cameras and chatter, but that's ultimately for Tomoko to decide. Unbeknown to Choko or the characters, Tomoko is not going to appear in time to even participate in the night's events.

ENTRANCE TO THE SENTŌ CLUB

From the outside, the Sentō Club looks like someone built a nightclub out of a traditional Japanese bathhouse, which is in fact the truth. Swooping gables are underlit with blacklights and flashing facsimiles of paper lanterns. The ground shakes from the pounding bass of the music pumped inside. The smell of scented hot water fills the air, alongside the caustic fragrance of cheap perfume. Neon AR signs along the floor guide the long line of waiting patrons through a small rock garden and toward the main entrance.

A beefy chromed-up Yuna bouncer, **Hase Rie** (with the Street Fighting Power Set, page 135), stands right inside the building, on its elegant wooden floor. Covered head to toe

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in the neon gang color, she gives the crew a careful look, but doesn't examine them too closely, as they're expected and honored guests. They can easily enter, evoking grunts of disapproval from those waiting in line.

THE CLUB IN CYBERSPACE

The Yuna gang are no fools, and they invested in a simple yet effective VR security system, an Epis Tar Pit. The club's Domain shares a surface similarity with its real-world counterpart, with all of the core systems hidden beneath the baths, under a thick layer of tar. There's no backdoor to allow one to reach these systems, and even the Yuna would need to dig through in order to reach them. Their assumption is that there's no need for anyone to be able to access these day-to-day systems, as everything is running smoothly on its own.

Hackers trying to breach the layer of tar have to dig through *thick-tar-4*. Consequences can create *system disruptions* in the club as uncareful diggers accidentally damage the lines representing power and maintenance channels. The Yuna have a *drill app* for getting through the security, but they're hesitant to give it to the crew without permission from Kobayashi Tomoko.

Gaining access to the core systems grants the hacker *superuser* status, and allows them to see and hear every room in the nightclub (including the hidden shrine) and to easily access all transmissions running through its Domain.

THE WASHROOMS

> After passing the lobby, the club splits into sides segregated by gender, with men's and women's restrooms and showers. This unusual setup for a nightclub seems to be exactly what the patrons are looking for, the experience they paid for. Excited, they enter their allotted side and simply strip down with each other, although many keep to the bare minimum of decency. Non-binary people are welcome to choose, and no one would really care if someone enters the "wrong" side – it's all a show, deliberately old fashioned, a nostalgic trip to a past none of these people lived through.
>
> As more savvy visitors, you realize that this setup has the added quirk preventing anyone from entering the main club floor with hidden weapons.

The crew can't bring their heavy equipment, armor, or weapons with them into the baths without doing so in an obvious and socially unacceptable way, earning contempt from the club goers and *botched-diplomacy-1* (see sidebar).

They could try to hide a weapon under a towel, or assert one's authority as members of the club's security team, but otherwise all such tags are burned. Cyberware and gear hidden inside cyber limbs get a free pass.

These washrooms are filled with criminal types. Some who were drawn by rumors of the Ghost Market are here for the very first time and are looking to test the limits of the club's security. If they have reason to think the PCs are working for the Yuna gangsters, the washrooms are a great place to assert their street cred by starting a fight. In this case, have a **Gang Member** (*Metro:Otherscape,* page 306) or three make some noise and swing their bravado around, providing the crew with another opportunity to get some *botched-diplomacy-1*.

THE BATHS

> The largest room in the sentō, comprising the nightclub's "main floor", is a set of three sizable heated baths. The edges of each bathing pool are rimmed with nude and half-nude gangsters and club goers, their skin strobing under the undulating club light. Some put an AR modesty screen, but most don't bother.
>
> The music is deafening here and you can feel it in your gut and your teeth. Your cybernetics rattle in place, shaking against the bones they're pinned and grafted onto. On the edge of the largest pool you see some Yuna girls, basking in the attention of the party goers that dance in the waters and chat with drinks in their hands – they rule this place, and behave like its queens and princesses. Along one entire wall is a fully stocked bar tended by three bartenders, one android maid, and a small fleet of server drones.

Characters scoping out the room notice a dark doorway, deliberately obscured by the lights and decorations. It is an antique wooden sliding door adorned with a painting of a water dragon, which leads to The Hidden Shrine. The door opens magically if whispered the correct password ("poison"), a code most Yuna girls know, but are unable to directly say. Getting the password from one of them takes some clever thinking, as the Yuna are magically compelled to avoid talking about the shrine, and the area is supposed to be out of bounds for any non-Yuna person. Otherwise, the door could be opened by breaking the magic spell that protects it (*magically-locked-3*).

If the negotiations are held here, the following tags apply: *water everywhere*, *pounding bass beat*

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THE HIDDEN SHRINE

> Behind the ornate door is another bath, this one much smaller and dominated by a tall stone statue of a water dragon spiraling over it. The room is dimly lit and the pounding beats of the club are surprisingly muted here. With so much Noise being absent, this space feels somehow more real than everything else in the sentō, maybe even in the streets outside. Something authentic and special dwells here, though it does not seem benevolent. A chill goes up your spine. You are being studied by something.

If the PCs attempt to communicate with the spirit here in any way, the mizuchi makes itself visible as a writhing blue serpent floating above the pool. The room glows from its presence.

The mizuchi speaks in whispers. It knows about the deal that the Yuna girls are planning to make with the Ghost Market, and it doesn't like it. It provides no explanation as to why, and doesn't reveal the deal it made with Kobayashi Tomoko, only stressing its desire to maintain the status quo. The spirit is open about its intentions to disrupt the negotiations, if asked. If the PCs want to stop it from harming the meeting, they'll need to either bind it (maxing its *bind* Limit) or make a deal with the spirit (maxing its *placate* Limit). It is practically impossible for the crew to banish this kami, as the owners of this establishment acknowledge and accept its presence.

If the negotiations are held here, the following tags apply: *small space*, *reverent silence*

MIZUCHI

The looming spirit of a water serpent kami, inhabiting the small shrine to its power within the sentō. The mizuchi cannot speak above a whisper, but it can do so from anywhere in the building, whispering to any visitor. It only wishes to slowly drain some life force out of party goers (it can take some from anyone who enters one of the baths), and it knows that its ability to do so could be jeopardized if the Yuna join up with the Ghost Market and abandon the nightclub as their base of operations.

The mizuchi is bound by *serpent-promise-6* keeping it from killing club patrons or speaking above a whisper. The Yuna are similarly bound, which prevents them from making any attempt to speak about the serpent or directly act against it.

The mizuchi's *placate* limit represents its willingness to allow the negotiations to take place. Unless this is maxed out, the serpent will disrupt the negotiations during the Negotiations.

MIZUCHI

LIMITS

BIND 5 **PLACATE 4**

TAGS & STATUSES

intangible, *kami's domain*, *serpent-promise-6*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Whisper quietly into someone's ear*
- » **Drive a hard bargain (remove a tier from *placate*)**
- » **Make a demand (player choose to remove two tiers from *placate* or take *bound-by-promise-2*)**

› *Dampen the noise of the world for a moment*
- » **Make a target feel calm, and utterly at peace (*ready-for-death-4*)**

› *Materialize, flying at a calmed target*
- » **Take a bite and disappear (*bitten-2* and *energy-drained-2* and the mizuchi becomes *intangible* again)**

- » **Cast the crew out of its shrine (Deny Them Something They Want)**

THE BACK ROOMS

The club's back rooms are used by the Yuna gang for storage, rest, offices and meetings. All of the rooms are either too small, too out of the way, or too messy and ugly to be of use as respectable meeting places. The gang invested all of the money in the club's front, and they themselves prefer to spend their time in the front rooms as well.

Kobayashi Tomoko's office serves as a meeting room for the gang's lieutenants. There's *ugly junk* as well as *crates of small arms* around. *Yuna keep coming and going* in search of some liquor or tool that Tomoko keeps in her office, annoyed that the crew are in their space.

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THE NIGHT'S ITINERARY

The events of the job proceed through the following scenes. Consequences can be used to push the timeline forward, or to represent demands that the Yuna gang make to the crew, such as asking them to meet with special guests outside and escort them to the VIP pool, or run minor errands around the sentō or the neighborhood.

The Yuna girls are not abusive, but they do intend to get everything they can out of the crew while they have them on hire.

When the crew arrive at the nightclub, give them some time to explore. **Kobayashi Tomoko** is nowhere to be found (she arrives during Closing the Deal, page 295), so if they are waiting for her arrival to get some permissions, they're wasting their time.

SEIRYU ARRIVES

More than half an hour before the time of the meeting, an argument erupts between Hase Rie, the bouncer at the front of the sentō, and an annoyed woman who seems to be threatening her. If the crew is not around to hear it, a Yuna girl chases them down, asking for their help – because the woman claims to be **Seiryū**, and Tomoko is not here to greet her. Seiryū's appearance, mannerisms, and Challenge profile are described on page 164.

Rie isn't willing to allow Seiryū to enter until Tomoko gives her approval, and Seiryū is losing her patience. If the crew does not intervene, take their time, or take an action that leads to Consequences, Seiryū blows powder at Rie's face, which cuts off the larger woman's ability to breathe. Seiryū then steps over the choking bouncer and enters the club. The people who were waiting in the line flee the area and the PCs gain *botched-diplomacy-2*, or *botched-diplomacy-3* if they face Seiryū or try to stop her. Unless Rie is cared for by the crew, she dies in less than a minute.

If the crew intervene in time to make sure Seiryū gets into the club without a problem, she simply nods to them curtly as she goes inside.

From now on, Seiryū sits on the bar in The Baths (she didn't undress, but she looks at others with amusement), taking little sips while she examines various data feeds and looks

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around. She does not engage with the crew or the Yuna, and asks to postpone any discussion until the negotiations begin. Use her to make things more complicated, potentially gaining *unimpressed-at-crew* or inflicting *botched-diplomacy* as a Consequence if she sees the crew embarrassing themselves.

THE ENFORCERS ARRIVE

When the time of the meeting draws near, three Ghost Market representatives, known as Enforcers (page 164, with the chūnin Special) present themselves at the entrance to the sentō. They wear recognizable illegal AR headsets and bear criminal tattoos that prove their loyalty to the secret masters who control the Ghost Market.

The Enforcers demand to be met with Yuna representatives at the entrance, and be shown in. If Hase Rie is not there, Choko greets them, unless the crew is ready for their arrival and waiting for them. The Enforcers present themselves as the Ghost Market representatives, and if told that Seiryū is already here, they react with suspicion – since she was not supposed to be part of this negotiation. "What kind of game are you playing?" One of them will ask the crew, as all three tense up and become *tense-2*.

This is one of Seiryū's famous power plays, an attempt to unbalance the Yuna and leave them confused. Seiryū is indeed in charge of the negotiations, she just didn't tell these chūnin she'll be coming. If the crew asks her about the Enforcers at the entrance, she laughs it off and tells the PCs the Enforcers "have her blessing" to enter. However, the chūnin do not believe the crew, and they'll only be content if they see Seiryū herself, which requires the crew to ask her nicely – which is exactly what she was going for. The crew might also manage to *placate:3* the enforcers some other way.

THE NEGOTIATIONS

> Once they've entered the designated area for the meeting, the Enforcers work together to produce and set up a communication device with which they establish a cyberspace connection to another person. Seiryū stands before the device as a holographic figure appears, their head bowed, their eyes lowered. The genderless stranger is dressed in a white suit, and holds an ornate katana in its scabbard. Their face is obscured by fabric.
>
> "You stand before the projection of White Bird." Says Seiryū, her tone strict. "They are the master of the council of elders. You will show respect." The Enforcers and the Yuna gang members present bow before the holographic figure.

Upon the appearance of White Bird, if even a single PC does not bow respectfully, they get *botched-diplomacy-3*. During the meeting, the Enforcers deploy a Mythic *Near-space-blackout-5* which hinders all attempts to record the meeting or communicate with cyberspace outside of the meeting space. Only non-digital recording devices work here, and they cannot perceive White Bird's AR projection.

White Bird has no patience to wait for the arrival of Kobayashi Tomoko. If the crew do not present themselves as speakers for the Yuna gang, Choko takes a stand and improvises, announcing she was asked to substitute for the leader.

The negotiations now begin, progressing in the following three step order: **Pleasantries**, **Hard Bargains**, and **Closing the Deal**.

PLEASANTRIES

Introductions are made and both sides show respectful deference towards the other. Kobayashi Tomoko not being in attendance is a serious offense to White Bird, and they say so as a Threat. Unless the crew can come up with an appropriate explanation to save face, they take *botched-diplomacy-3*.

If they instead let Choko speak, she says Kobayashi is recovering from an attack on the Garbage Sitters, a rival gang of filthy, honorless scum who were trying to sabotage this meeting in order to destroy the Yuna's reputation (the Sitters indeed exist, but have been in a ceasefire with the Yuna for several months). It's a simple lie, and while White Bird sees right through it, they are willing to accept it. The whole point of the exercise is for the Yuna to show that they respect the Ghost Market and their time, Kobayashi herself doesn't matter. The crew only take *botched-diplomacy-1*; this is one of those rare occasions in which it might be best to just shut up and let the NPC do the talking. Choko only knows how to sound polite, though, and has no handle on negotiations.

If the crew now has *botched-diplomacy-4* or higher, the Ghost Market Enforcers will insist that one of them – the one they perceive as the worst offender – be removed from the negotiations. The PCs can try to counter this demand, but the *botched-diplomacy* status hinders this action.

HARD BARGAINS

Once the pleasantries are out of the way, the real bargaining begins.

The Yuna's Position: Choko can explain what her gang has been up to in terms of smuggling, fencing, and supplying. She says that the gang is focused on their part of town and that they have no intention of expanding, so the Ghost Market has nothing to worry about in terms of large-scale encroachment.

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The Ghost Market's Position: White Bird suggests that Choko and the Yuna are not being forthcoming about their activities and their plans. The Market only engages with those it can control; it has no equals, only subordinates. White Bird presents a simple ultimatum: the Yuna must become members of the Ghost Market's cartel, selling their best goods only through its traveling black market and paying a large cut of their profits to the organization. If asked what will happen if the Yuna refuse, White Bird says: "You die."

The Dispute: In essence, the Yuna want to remain free to deal with other clients and cooperate with the Ghost Market while the Ghost Market wants them to become completely subordinate. There's no question about the Yuna becoming a vassal, it's only a matter of how much freedom they'll be allowed to retain. White Bird makes it clear they see no third choice, since they will no longer allow the Yuna to continue to operate and possibly encroach on Market territory.

The Conversation: It is up to the crew to secure the best possible outcome for their employers, the Yuna. This can be played out in the following ways:

- Entirely via narration
- By using quick outcomes to establish milestones and understandings between the parties until an agreement is reached or the negotiations break down
- As a tracked conflict, using The Negotiations Challenge profile, where the PCs must max out *remain-free:4* before White Bird runs *out-of-patience:3*, the Enforcers *start-fighting:4*, or *botched-diplomacy:6* maxes out.

The *botched-diplomacy* status affects all attempts to negotiate in the Yuna's name. Consider the Threats and Consequences listed in the The Negotiations Challenge profile, even if you're not using its Limits.

The crew is welcome to suggest other avenues. For example, the Ghost Market can find good use for a captured mizuchi kami... White Bird would consider such a gift as worth allowing the Yuna to maintain autonomy for another year. The terms will then need to be reconsidered, but should the Yuna prove themselves honorable and profitable during this time, the negotiations will have a very different tone. Or, the Yuna could then procure another useful kami to trade for their freedom.

Choko: Throughout the negotiations, Choko can serve as the crew's source of information. If no crew member takes the negotiator role, Choko will continue to improvise, but her lack of professionalism is likely to derail the talks (see her Threat and Consequence).

The Mizuchi: At a point of your choosing, the mizuchi begins to interfere, if it hasn't been dealt with at its shrine. It begins to whisper into the ears of the Ghost Market representatives that are physically present that the Yuna are plotting against them, working with yōkai and other beasts that only wish to create chaos among the criminal elite. If the crew fails to calm things down and the mizuchi succeeds in sufficiently angering the Ghost Market representatives, they may *start-fighting:4* and attack the Yuna and the crew.

THE NEGOTIATIONS

LIMITS

REMAIN FREE 4 | OUT OF PATIENCE 3

BOTCHED DIPLOMACY 6 | START FIGHTING 4

TAGS & STATUSES

Nearspace-blackout-5

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Enforcers cross arms in frustration*
» **Emotions flare (all Enforcers and Yuna present get *angry-2*)**

› *Enforcers look to White Bird for guidance*
» **White Bird makes an understated threat (*botched-diplomacy-2*)**

› *Seiryū begins addressing one of the PCs*
» **Seiryū deliberately offends or angers that PC (*provoked-4*)**

› *White Bird is unnervingly silent*
» **Everyone senses White Bird's patience is wearing thin (*losing-patience-1*)**

› *(If the crew lets Choko lead) Choko is too casual in her conversation and too often gets distracted by her AR feeds*
» **White Bird calls out her disrespectful attitude (*botched-diplomacy-3*)**

› *The Enforcers and Seiryū stand still for a moment (as they listen to the whispers of the mizuchi)*
» **The Enforcers and Seiryū become *angry-2***

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FIGHTING IT OUT...

If a fight ensues, the chūnin focus on trying to kill all present Yuna, while Seiryū departs. The Enforcers issue warnings to any crew member who interferes that they won't be harmed if they stand to the side. If attacked or prevented from harming the Yuna, they engage with the crew until death. White Bird watches in silence until they decide to deactivate the link, and the device burns itself.

...OR CLOSING THE DEAL

Assuming negotiations continue, ultimately it's up to the Yuna to decide their own fate. If they manage to remain free, Choko signs up enthusiastically. Otherwise, she asks the crew what they think the Yuna should do, now that they've had a chance to see the Ghost Market up close and personal. The Yuna all agree that they're not afraid of the Ghost Market, and are able to defend their home turf, and they consider their autonomy too important to just sell out.

Unless persuaded otherwise, the Yuna will refuse White Bird's offer. If they are convinced to work for the Ghost Market's cartel, they're not happy about it, but they end the negotiations with their underworld reputations intact. If they decide to decline the offer, the Enforcers swear vengeance and get ready to withdraw.

Before the deal is struck, Kobayashi Tomoko finally arrives. Sweating and somewhat drug-addled, she apologizes profusely to White Bird, and takes all blame on herself, a move that the old master appreciates. If the Yuna have already signed to become a semi-independent part of the cartel, White Bird is forgiving. Tired of talking, they then just disconnect.

In all other cases, White Bird instead issues a final demand: they are willing to let the Yuna join their cartel and maintain autonomy (and forgive all *botched-diplomacy)* at the cost of Choko's head. Tomoko must prove that she is not only capable of shouldering responsibility, but also act, and handle her own people. Tomoko asks for the crew's help in avoiding this resolution, but should they fail, she ultimately agrees to the terms.

AFTERMATH

In the best case scenario, the Yuna remain independent and now also work with the Ghost Market. Tomoko knows the importance of networking and doesn't quickly forget who did good by her.

She maintains contact with the crew and offers them Yuna goods at reasonable prices (they are able to easily source most **Enhancers** on the **Tokyo Street Catalog**, page 86).

If the Yuna declined the Market's offer, they now have the enmity of an organization secretly run by the shinobi. Many in the underworld cut connections with them, and it's up to the PCs if they want to still be associated with the Yuna. Kobayashi Tomoko has further need for them, and would like to hire the crew to protect various Yuna initiatives – some groups are already seeing them as weak and try to prey on them.

If the crew defeated the Enforcers through violence, they may have ruined their reputation among the criminals of the Megacity for a long time to come, cutting them off from the black market and potential employers. However, there is a surprising number of patrons, among them several powerful corp executives, who are looking for someone brave and foolish enough to do what the crew did. They are willing to pay in rare assets and privileged access to those who are ready to keep being so incredibly brave. And foolish.

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A BRIDGE TOO FAR

A botched courier job could move heaven and earth



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BACKGROUND

Junjō is an entheogen – a type of psychoactive substance consumed for the purpose of achieving mystical experiences – only this one is primed as a Source for the Ame-no-ukihashi (the Floating Bridge of Heaven), which connects the mortal realm with the heavens.

Hikage Pharmaceuticals developed it in the hopes of creating a drug that'll allow for a clear state of mind, but got more than they bargained for.

The Junjō sends its user on a spiritual journey of enlightenment, opening their minds and hearts to the secrets of the cosmos, which inevitably also transforms them into something beyond human and closer to the kami. As a result, exposed subjects show superhuman awareness and wisdom, but also a deep desire to promote the enlightenment of all mankind (akin to a bodhisattva or a saint).

Hikage based the substance on fungi harvested from the **Amanohashidate Sandbar** near Kyoto, which according to myth is part of the fallen bridge. By doing so, they drew the attention of the entities who have been keeping an eye on this place for ages.

The secretive employers of the crew are **Hiruma-Miyaki Corporate Group** (HMCG), actually a corporate front for the **Amatsukami** spirits, protectors of Japan who reside in Takamagahara, the heaven beyond the bridge (a kami island, page 33). These powerful beings remember a time when Heaven and Earth were joined, when they were able to shape humanity's destiny according to their view of what is best for mankind. While their intentions are pure, the Amatsukami's ways are definitely alien, and some may see their master plan as a wish to force a transhumanist transformation on mankind to make them more like the kami. Initially, they plan to spread the Junjō Source-touched substance from a high point over a populated district, rebuilding the residents' psyches to transcend first the Noise and then their Self – freeing (or disconnecting) them from the human experience completely.

JOB BRIEFING

Listen up, there's a briefcase that needs a chaperone.

Recently, one of the **Iribe-gumi Yakuza Syndicate** (page 222) managed to get his hands on a prototype formula called **Junjō** ("pure heart", "naivety") produced by **Hikage Pharmaceuticals**. Your client is interested in buying this stolen property.

Your contact with the client is the **Yatagarasu**, an enigmatic figure who only approaches people in cyberspace. True to her namesake, a divine crow who guides mortals, the Yatagarasu appears as a pale Japanese woman in an ornate kimono with sleek, black feathers in place of hair and piercing golden eyes. She already handled the negotiations with the Iribe-gumi, you only have to pick up the package from the courier.

This Yakuza courier is nicknamed **Habu** (a deadly South-Asian snake), and he'll be waiting for you at a food vendor's stall in the famed **Ghost Market** (page 159). Habu is an infamous troublemaker, so the Yatagarasu wants to make sure everything's set before giving you more information about the next step. Once the case is in your hands, you'll contact her to confirm receipt and be told the dropoff point. You will then bring it securely to a meeting spot, and job's done.

Oh, and the briefcase? More like an environmentally-sealed code-locked case. Better be careful with that thing.

To get the Junjō substance, the **Yatagarasu**, agent of the Amatsukami, contracted **Habu**, an established thief of the Iribe-gumi Yakuza Syndicate, to break into Hikage Pharmaceuticals. Because of its extreme potency, and because she didn't trust Habu, the Yatagarasu provided him with a special case, environmentally-sealed and magically protected. The Yakuza were paid well not to ask questions, only to deliver the case to the Ghost Market.

JOB SYNOPSIS

The crew's job is to pick up the case from Habu at the Ghost Market, and confirm it's in their possession by activating a code on the case's display.

The first part is going to be tricky, since Habu is dead. As the crew is about to discover, the rival **Maikubi-kai** Yakuza clan (page 222) killed Habu and took the case. The crew will have to get it back by infiltrating a Maikubi-kai dog fighting parlor, which hides a Yakuza drug biolab. By the

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time the crew arrives the technicians become exposed to the substance and become enlightened, providing the first hint that something serious is going on.

With the case in their hands, the crew is able to contact the Yatagarasu who reveals where it is to be taken: a Zen garden skybridge at the **Tokyo Cascade**, a famously tall building in one of Tokyo's more populated areas. The **Bureau of Onmyō** keeps a secret House of Zen (page 314) on the skybridge, and the Yatagarasu knows one of the statues there holds the imprisoned Source of **Amenonuhoko** (the jeweled spear used to raise Japan from the ocean), which will help to disperse the entheogen over the entire district.

The Yatagarasu keeps all of this from the crew, but they can dig a bit and discover further details on the substance and their employers. They are eventually contacted by the Bureau of Onmyō, who wants to get rid of the substance before it does any more harm to the Megacity. They too want the case taken to the Tokyo Cascade, because that Jeweled Spear can be used to seal the Junjō substance and remove it as a threat.

Whoever the crew decides to work with, they'll be chased by the other side as they make their way to the Tokyo Cascade, where a final confrontation awaits. Or they can choose to work with neither side, and paint a giant target on their backs.

GOOD VS. HUMAN

The moral dilemma in this job revolves around the question of whether the crew would sacrifice their own humanity to achieve a better world, and whether they should make this choice for others. For this to be effective, the Amatsukami should be presented as truly benevolent. There is no dilemma in whether evil alien spirits trying to transform humanity should be stopped. But when kind-hearted angels are trying to make things better for everyone at the cost of leaving humanity behind, each PC is meaningfully confronted with all the things that make them human and that they're unwilling to let go of, for better or for worse. This makes for better roleplaying and cinematic moments.

HOOKS

For most hooks, this will seem like a regular job until the crew is in too deep and realizes the massive stakes involved. The Yatagarasu would like to meet with the crew via VR once they accept the mission, to see them for herself and to answer a few basic questions, although vaguely, and never revealing what's in the case or who she is working for. Before flying away she presents the crew with a code to be input into the case once it's in their hands, which is the only way to contact her again.

- An easy way for a group of **All-Around Fixers**, **Found Family**, **Rebellious Street Gang**, or a **Wanted** crew to get involved in this scenario is for a shugo (**Honor Among Mercs**, page 16) to contract them out of the blue, connecting them with an employer who wishes to remain anonymous. This kind of thing happens all the time for street mercenaries, although the shugo should be a respected one, hinting that the employer, and the job, are more important than they seem.
- For a **Source Cabal** or **Source-Hunting Privateers**, the Yatagarasu specifically seeks them out for being well-versed in Sources. She sees these characters as ready allies with the Amatsukami against the Noise, and assumes they will support the kami's aims when these are revealed.
- A crew of **Elite Specialists** working for a corporation could be referred to the Yatagarasu as part of business dealings. The crew's regular employers are working on a deal with the Hiruma-Miyaki Corporate Group and offer the services of their troubleshooters as part of the incentives.
- If the crew are **Community Protectors**, place the Tokyo Cascade in their district or nearby. The Yatagarasu might be more open regarding her intentions, trying to appeal to the crew's sense of community.

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ACT I:

GHOSTED

To make their meeting, the crew will first need to track down the current location of the **Ghost Market** (page 159), the ever-changing and ever-moving underground night market of the Megacity.

This can be achieved with divination, by hacking an invitee (such as a nefarious arms dealer), or by leveraging contacts in the Megacity's criminal underworld. This could be resolved as a quick outcome with a tier-3 opposing status such as *secretive-3* or *firewalled-3*, with potentially substantial Consequences, such as being *indebted-3* to their contact.

Unless they have had dealings with the Ghost Market before, the crew are unlikely to get more than a one-time invitation, but that's enough.

ENTERING THE GHOST MARKET

> The night is hot, noisy, and smells of burnt plastic. So everything's as usual. The only hint that something's off, that you're on the right direction toward the Ghost Market, is the occasional cherry petal dancing in the unseen winds, an AR artifact you can only see thanks to the cryptocodes you were given. As you turn a corner, you are almost blinded for a moment by a storm of petals, revealing behind it - the Ghost Market.
>
> The Ghost Market, while within the Megacity, is not *of* the Megacity. It is a realm of its own, and tonight that realm is a series of rope bridges hung between the abandoned metal towers of an old server farm. Standing solemnly within a cavernous warehouse, the tall metal structures that once held the servers of a digital world have been hung with glowing lanterns and swaying pathways, supported by data and power cables. Suspended platforms hold market stalls of all sorts as visitors mingle at a dozen different heights. In AR, neon-red cherry trees rise between the ropes, shedding petals which disappear into a heavily-encrypted AR layer that bathes everything in a fog.

The large towers have been stripped of most of their valuable parts long ago and so are now filled with *hidden spaces* which some shopkeepers are exploiting. The *swaying bridges* might prove unsteady footing in a fight, which is exactly why they're here, a deterrent against violence. Several *high voltage cables* provide electricity for the hanging lanterns, which are the only source of light around, casting huge shadows across the towers. In cyberspace, Nearspace is full of *thick fog* hiding several Harnessed **Enforcers** (page 164).

Once the crew has a chance to look around, continue.

> A few moments after you enter the Market grounds, an AR figure flickers to life before you, like a visiting ghost. It is a thin man with almost reptilian features, his brimmed hat pulled low and a dramatic cape draped over his shoulders. His voice is clear even with the noise of the Market.
>
> "Greetings, I am Habu. This recording is encrypted and keyed to you so I can speak freely." Habu gives a dramatic sweep of his cape and a devilish grin twinkles under the hat's brim.
>
> "I have the package, but I have picked up several tails. I can lose them, but I encourage you to arrive at the pick-up prepared. I was told you are *professionals*." It's unclear if he is emphasizing for effect, or to mock.
>
> His image lifts a bulky environmentally-sealed case. It seems heavy. "I have encoded the location of the pick-up in this message. Come when you are ready." With a final flourish of his cape, Habu's recording ends.

Habu's pick-up point is at the Kushikatsu Odoroki Stall, but the crew might want to take his warning to heart. The Ghost Market provides ample opportunity to stock up on equipment.

SHOPPING SPREE

The stalls within the Market project an AR overlay that can only be seen by authorized visitors, offering a range of military-grade drugs, stolen data, unsanctioned cybertech, destructive computer viruses, assassins for hire, and the latest corp inside info. For more information on making purchases at the market, see **Purchases And Loadouts At The Ghost Market** (page 161).

If the crew wishes to haggle with the merchants, use the **Ghost Market Dealer** Challenge (page 163). If the crew threatens the dealers or causes trouble, the situation could change into a standoff with **Enforcers** (page 164), who will give a single warning before banishing the crew from the premises, both digitally and physically.

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THE MARKET IN CYBERSPACE

In AR and VR, tonight's Ghost Market appears to be a forest of massive, crystalline trees shrouded in smoke. As visitors move through the space, the smoke solidifies into pathways beneath them like the swinging bridges of the physical market.

There are signs of trouble here, indicators of lurking threats that also concerned Habu. The jōnin who control the Market know that the Maikubi-kai Syndicate has been sniffing around and, while they don't want to discourage commerce in the physical market, they have placed Harnessed **Enforcers** as observers, crawling through the crystal branches of the digital trees in monkey-like avatars. The jōnin mistakenly expect the Maikubi-kai to launch a brute-force attack through cyberspace, as they've done in the past.

RUMORS FROM THE MOUTH OF A FOX

Before or after meeting with Habu, the crew might want to learn about the threats surrounding them. They're in the right place, as information brokers from all across Japan Harness into the Ghost Market server to sell and trade.

As exceptional individuals, though, the crew will attract the attention of a particular broker named **Chiyo** ("a thousand worlds") as soon as they begin looking around. Chiyo approaches them boldly, using the fox-bodied avatar of a kitsune (fox spirit), and implies that she already knows what they want to find out.

In reality, Chiyo is an actual kitsune (page 119) who has successfully melded her power into a digital avatar to give her some magical abilities in cyberspace. She likes theatrical displays, so her kitsune avatar constantly performs close up street magic, and while talking to the crew she might make a coin disappear and reappear, pretend to bend a metal spoon with her mind, or pull a paper with information from behind their ear. Since this is cyberspace, the tricks are far from impressive, but Chiyo meets skepticism with a yipping fox-laugh.

While Chiyo knows less than she's implying, the kitsune is able to use her sorcery to read the tides of fortune and knows that the crew is currently, or soon will be, at odds with the Maikubi-kai Yakuza clan. She will drop hints about what she knows to draw the crew in, but to get actual answers the player characters will need to exchange a little life energy. Under the guise of picking a card for a card trick, Chiyo gives seekers *drained-1* for each answer she provides, slowly drawing on their strength (this can be mitigated as normal). Understanding the cause for the sudden feeling of weakness requires a roll affected by Chiyo's *mysterious-2*.

- Chiyo first shares that the Maikubi-kai know the Iribe-gumi are making a transfer here tonight, and they want the package simply because the Iribe-gumi consider it valuable.
- The two clans wage a bitter war.
- It's likely the Maikubi-kai know something about the package, they are at least aware of where it was stolen from.
- The Maikubi-kai know that fighting in the Ghost Market is akin to suicide, since its Enforcers go to great lengths to keep it a neutral zone, and will make an example of you without batting an eye. Therefore, if they try something fishy, it'll be through a secret surgical strike or a third party. Or both.

If the crew turns against the kitsune she attempts to escape, but doesn't harbor any grudge – it's all part of the game.

KUSHIKATSU ODOROKI STALL

> *Kushikatsu*, meat fried on wooden skewers, originated in the Osaka area, but has spread throughout Japan as a street food with a thousand variations. Kushikatsu Orodoki serves them all with a wide menu that stretches above a countertop. The whole stall – counter, kitchen, and all – is crammed on a small platform which hangs to the side of one of the footbridges, held by glowing neon ropes. Hanging swings serve as seats, some of which would leave customers dangling over a twenty meter drop. Despite the bright lanterns and long menu, the platform is quiet and no one is here.

The meeting with Habu takes place at **Kushikatsu Orodoki**, a small food stall serving kushikatsu-style skewered, fried meat. The platform is hung over a very high drop.

Digital indicators in AR show that the Kushikatsu Orodoki also offers off-the-record courier services like the sort Habu could use and any player characters with criminal ties might have even heard of it. But the data is heavily fragmented, and in cyberspace the place is surrounded by *empty blackness*, the result of an advanced digital bomb that was detonated by the Maikubi-kai.

When the crew enters or surveils the stall in physical space, read the following.

> Behind the counter, two cooks are laying on the floor, both dead from expertly precise wounds. In the tiny open kitchen behind them, your contact Habu too is laying life-

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less, on top of his fancy cape. It's clear that he gave more of a fight: Habu's dramatic cape is stained with blood, and the knife in his kidney bears the clear image of three severed samurai heads, even advertising it into AR. There is no sign of the case.

Everyone knows that killing within the Ghost Market is a very big no-no, with the offender likely to either be banned for life or found mysteriously dead.

INVESTIGATING THE SCENE

More details about the murder can be learned by taking action to investigate the scene.

- A PC may recall the image of three severed samurai heads is used by the Maikubi-kai Yakuza clan, who are currently at war with the Iribe-gumi clan, to which Habu belongs.
- Habu put up a good fight, but was overwhelmed by at least three assailants. They seemed to have come specifically for the case, and had no issue with dealing death.
- Checking the timestamps in AR or if the bodies are examined with forensic knowledge or psychic means, it's possible to come to the conclusion that the assassins left no more than a few minutes ago. They left no trail that can be tracked.

TRACKING DOWN THE CASE

Finding out where the Maikubi-kai assassins escaped with the case requires an additional action or spending additional Power on **Discover**, either within the Market (asking Ghost Market Dealers or Chiyo) or after leaving it. As the Maikubi-kai are a major player in the Megacity and are known for being loud, it's not hard to find someone who knows about their local operations; a big score like this case will make some waves in the rumor sphere within even an hour or two.

Habu's killers, the assassins themselves, are lost to the winds and won't be found during this job. However, all signs point at them dropping the case at the Hungry Dog Pachinko Parlor, which is a known dog fighting ring. A great success or more Power spent on **Discover** can reveal the place received an unusual shipment of pharmaceutical equipment lately, as if in preparation to do some lab work; this is because the Maikubi-kai are aware that the contents of the case were produced by Hikage Pharmaceuticals, and are getting ready to examine them.

NEZUMI AMBUSH

Before leaving, the Maikubi-kai assassins tipped off a gang of **Nezumi Punks** (page 110) that an easy target might be coming by soon. The assassins convinced the brash Nezumi that fighting "just outside" the Ghost Market is permitted, not that it helps the punks, since they weren't invited and can't see the Market's limits.

As the crew prepares to leave, the punks approach (half a dozen, Scale 2). They surround the crew on one of the bridges and try to bully them, soon resorting to violence in an attempt to steal anything valuable. After one or two of them are down (once the collective takes any status on *hurt-or-subdue*), they probably realize they're facing professional mercs, and start running away.

Depending on how loud things get, this could become a very messy, very cinematic running fight between the crew, the Nezumi, and the Market's Enforcers as the crew tries to *escape-the-market:4* along swinging bridges and down metal towers.

EXPLAINING AWAY THE BLAME

Should the crew engage in conversation with the Enforcers, and especially if they come to the genin of their own volition, they can clarify that they are not to blame for what happened in Kushikatsu Odoroki. Cyberspace logs reveal the damage was done before any of the crew even approached the area, and as mentioned before, the masters of the Ghost Market already suspected a Maikubi-kai attack was coming tonight. It might take some time, during which they are detained by the genin, but the crew is eventually absolved of all wrongdoing. The same is true for a fight initiated by the Nezumi Punks, assuming of course the violence was indeed initiated by them, and not a trigger-happy PC.

If the PCs run away with no explanation, though, this resolution might come only much later on. The genin will eventually chase the crew to their homes and kidnap them, to be put on trial before a chūnin, but that is beyond the scope of this job.

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ACT II:

FED TO THE HOUNDS

The **Hungry Dog Pachinko Parlor** is a Maikubi-kai stronghold under the management of a 20-something fool called **Ichiro.**

This permanently-bruised bully is the son of an important shatei, placed here by the higher ups to keep him out of trouble. The parlor practically runs itself, as do the secret kennels and genetic lab in the basement, so the higher ups figured Ichiro couldn't mess things up.

HUNGRY DOG PACHINKO PARLOR

> The clicking and clacking of metal balls. The bright flashing lights and chiming sounds of games and advertisements. The smells of street food and asphalt, still hot from the day. The rancid smell of gamblers, sweaty and often drunk. The Hungry Dog Pachinko Parlor looks a lot like most betting establishments, but with the added veneer of organized criminality waiting to unleash violence.

The betting parlor is built on top of a hidden Inugami Kennels and Canine Biolab, where the stolen case was brought.

To enter the place, the crew can simply blend in with the crowd. The Nezumi Punks in the Ghost Market are the only ones who saw the crew's faces, so as long as they avoid drawing attention, it's possible to get inside with ease.

If they snoop around first, though, the crew can notice several guards outside, hinting something more is happening here, and that the betting parlor is a front. A wide door at the back of the building, specifically, seems to have a lot of security around it. It opens into a cargo elevator leading down to the Inugami Kennels.

To gain entry, the crew can attempt to sneak past the guards and *hack-open:3* the door. If they're spotted, the guards attempt to subdue them – see the sidebar **Captured!** The Security Guards (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 305) have the Street Fighting Power Set (page 135) and are armed with tasers that inflict *stunned-3*.

CAPTURED!

The Maikubi-kai have a reputation for being brazen, although they would say they're simply less stuck up than other Yakuza. Disposing of intruders with a bullet to the brain is no fun; the Maikubi-kai would rather make it into an amusing event.

When it comes to intruders, the Syndicate's Security Guards use their tasers and hand-to-hand fighting with the aim to subdue, not kill. PCs who are restrained or rendered unconscious will be taken to The Arena to partake in the next arena match. The Maikubi-kai will make sure to remove any obvious weapons, burning appropriate equipment-related tags.

THE ARENA

> The sound hits you like a sonic wall as you walk past the entrance, followed by the scent of burning drugs and the glitter of AR-enhanced outfits. The crowd, a mix of every social rung in the Megacity, all seem on edge, ready for violence. The cause of the bloodthirsty tone becomes clear as soon as the Pit comes into view.
>
> On the sand-covered floor of an arena five meters down, two monstrous beasts are locked in vicious combat. They superficially resemble dogs, but someone has modified their genome in unspeakable ways to create something more like demons.

As with many other Maikubi-kai gambling establishments in the Megacity, the inugami fighting arena is the main draw of this pachinko parlor. While patrons watch from above, the inugami fight in an arena that is directly adjacent to the Inugami Kennels on the basement level.

Dog fighting is illegal in Tokyo, so the Maikubi-kai circumvented the issue by creating the inugami ("dog god"), named after the mythical phenomena of becoming possessed by the spirit of a dog. These inugami are not Mythical, but nor are they technically dogs.

MIXING WITH THE CROWD

The dubious audience around the arena is focused on the kennel doors below before the match, and becomes completely *wild-3* during a fight. If the crew raise the suspicion of the Maikubi-kai here, the Yakuza will attempt to deal with them subtly by slipping them drugged drinks or pricking them in the crowd with a drugged needle (*drugged-unconscious-5*). If the crew openly cause a fuss, the Yakuza

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will use their tasers to neutralize and apprehend any troublemakers. The thick, sweaty crowds are an excellent opportunity to separate the crew members from each other as a Consequence.

If the Yakuza on the floor are questioned, it should soon become clear that none of them know anything useful. The people in charge – as well as any important item that might be in their possession – are underground, "in the basements".

The stairway to "the basements" is inside the parlor's private section, behind secured doors, and leads to the Inugami Kennels. Stealing a keycard from a Yakuza is a good start, but the back rooms are *crammed-4* full of drugged or drunk Yakuza and it's practically impossible to sneak past them. A distraction such as *sudden fire*, *loud argument*, or *gang fight* could support an attempt to sneak through the back rooms.

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

> The floor is covered in what feels and smells clearly like old blood. Above and all around, wide transparent aluminum windows show gang members watching and laughing. You even see some screens flashing bets back and forth. All of this becomes markedly less important as large metal grates on the other side of the room begin to slowly creak open and a bone-chilling howl comes through.

If the PCs end up inside the arena at any point, the Maikubi-kai unleash the inugami (page 226) on them. This should be a challenging fight, but not necessarily deadly; the Maikubi-kai want a long and bloody fight, not a massacre, so they release only a few inugami at a time. One or two inugami should be more than enough, especially if the crew is without their weapons and/or wounded.

In the middle of the fight, once the tide seems about to turn in the crew's or the inugami's favor, an alarm sounds.

> As the creature crouches low for another attack, you see some commotion in the kennels beyond the metal grates that encircle the arena. There is inaudible shouting and the Yakuza look at each other with uncertainty. More shouting, and then the group quickly leaves. The alarm blares on.

A contamination breach just happened in Canine Biolab and it means that the Maikubi-kai will not be around to release more inugami when the current threats are neutralized. The crew can open the door with no one to stop them (*unlock:2* or *batter-down:4*, or if Ichiro is there, grab his personal hanko seal and use it to unlock the door).

INUGAMI KENNELS

> Loud barking noises, resembling screeching or grinding more than dog howls, echo from some distant chamber of this dimly lit series of corridors you've found yourselves in. The floor is plastic and the walls are pale green, with pipes and wires strewn across the ceilings.
>
> "Is this them?"
>
> A young man, his thick black hair brushed to the side in the current fashion of rich idiots, approaches from a corridor, shutting down some AR communication with one hand while holding a half-eaten energy bar in the other.
>
> "Hey, yeah, so you're here for the package?" He grins.

The kennels are a basement facility for housing the inugami and they encircle the arena, which is on the same level. They are connected to the Canine Biolab at different points by a number of exposed concrete corridors. When the crew eventually advances towards the lab, an alarm sounds (as a Threat). While it might seem related to their interloping (or to the inugami running wild in the corridors, see below), it was in fact triggered by a containment breach in the biolab.

ICHIRO

If the crew enters the kennels on their own terms, they are likely to bump into **Ichiro**: either he got word of their approach or he is simply prowling his domain (use the Gang Member Challenge in *Metro:Otherscape* page 306, with the Maikubi-kai Power Set, page 227). The good-for-nothing Yakuza handler knows someone will probably be coming after the secret package he received earlier, and, fancying himself a cunning crook, he just can't help trying to pit his "smarts" against his opponents'. He welcomes the crew in, explains he is in charge, tells them he knows they're here for the case. From there on, Ichiro may do any of the following:

- Feign disinterest, saying he'll just give the case to the crew "since it's of no use to us".
- Try to lure the PCs into The Arena and lock the gates behind them. If he can't manage it, he might even foolishly walk into the arena with them and lock himself in, believing he could take down the inugami.
- Unleash inugami into the corridors of the basement to devour the crew, most likely losing control over the beasts.

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Unfortunately for him, Ichiro overestimates his ability. If he ends up in the arena or loses control over the inugami in the basement corridors, have one of the inugami bite one of his arms off during Establish. Ichiro carries a hanko seal that opens all doors in the premises.

CANINE BIOLAB

> These rooms clearly serve as a high-grade biotechnology lab, radiating order and professionality that contrasts with the rough and lawless atmosphere of the rest of this building. Syringes and surgical equipment are arranged neatly next to gleaming tables and a refrigerator to the side is filled with carefully-labeled sample vials. The walls are covered with holographic charts of the muscular systems of canine creatures.
>
> The calm and silence of the lab is disrupted with a clatter from the back of the space. A woman walks out of a lab space further back, her spiked hair and neck tattoo marking her as one of the Yakuza, but her white coat and badge indicate she is a technician in this lab. Smeared across her face is some gold-colored liquid and there's a faint glow to her eyes. The technician pays no attention to you, but runs her hand along a surgical table. "Chromium 12.1%," she says absently to herself, "carbon 1.1%, trace nickel and molybdenum... Stainless steel, type 418." She moves on to the next table and repeats the ritual, seemingly determining the chemical composition of everything in the lab at a glance.

The Canine Biolab is where the Maikubi-kai employ scientists to develop the inugami. The entrance to the lab is *hermetically sealed*, requiring an action to open. If the crew has Ichiro's private hanko, they can just press it to the panel and the door will open.

Upon entering, the crew comes upon an *enlightened-6* lab technician, who has come in contact with the Junjō substance after the lab team attempted to open the environmental case taken from Habu. The technicians used heavy equipment in their attempt to break through the lock, but all they managed to do is pry one of the claps slightly open, just enough to allow some of the golden entheogen to leak out. This particular technician started to see the composition of everything around her, laid out like computer code. Other technicians, found in other rooms of the laboratory space, had different experiences:

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- A thick-set man sits in a lotus position in one surgical area, floating a few centimeters above the surgical table. His eyes are closed, his gold-smeared hands folded in his lap, and a blissful smile creases his face as he contemplates something and everything.
- At a corner of an office, five Yakuza enforcers kneel at the feet of a small woman, offering prayers to her as "a living kami". Three other enforcers lay closer to her, two with compound fractures, one dead. The woman, who has a golden liquid smeared on her hands, pays them no heed, scribbling furiously on a clipboard. She is writing dense, incomprehensible philosophical theory over the top of lab reports.
- A man with a thick scar on his arm, clearly not a technician but smeared with the gold liquid, wanders past the crew saying he needs to "teach to the masses", although whenever he's asked about the subject of his teachings, he gives a different answer. He's firm in his desire to leave, but otherwise not aggressive (allowing him to go back to the pachinko parlor could result in security showing up).
- A nonbinary technician is working at a lab bench with two dozen different vials of materials around them, all grabbed from a nearby lab fridge. They are scribbling formulae and notes on a floating AR board, as they mix and test compounds. Gold liquid is smeared across their face as their glowing eyes beam with compassion. If asked what they are doing, the technician only replies "Curing loneliness. I am very busy, please."

Talking to those affected by the Junjō will offer only strange and cryptic answers, but several things are evident: the conditions of these people are extremely varied, and they are all focused and in fine physical health. Investigating the scene can connect the golden liquid with the strange situation, and confirm it is of Mythic origins.

THE STOLEN CASE

> On the far lab bench there is an environmental case of the sort described by the Yatagarasu: octogonal, with several claps and a digital touchscreen. Next to it is an industrial circular saw, a liquid nitrogen tank, and a beaker of strong acid which were clearly used in attempts to open this thing. All they've managed to do, however, is mildly damage one of the seals. Through a tiny opening, a small bit of a fluorescent golden liquid leaked out, some is still smeared on the case's surface. The golden fingerprints and handprints around suggest the rush the technicians must have been in when they accidentally contaminated themselves.

This is the environmental case carrying the entheogen. The leak self-sealed shortly after being created, so if the crew is careful, they can move the case with no further issues. The first character to touch the Junjō leftovers gains the status *enlightened-6*. This is an overwhelming and powerful, but not necessarily negative condition created by the entheogen's unique composition. Describe to the players the feeling of sagacity, of opening to a new plane of reality and taking the first step toward true understanding, which can be at once both frightening and tempting, a chance to transcend beyond the bounds of human existence and all that entails.

The infection can be mitigated with appropriate Mythic powers, such as being already *warded*, as well as tags representing mental and emotional fortitude or resilience. Alternatively, PCs can simply roll with their Self as their Power (see **Rolling With Self, Mythos, Or Noise**, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 122).

If the final status tier is at tier 5, the PC passes out from the overwhelming experience, and wakes up later with *enlightened-4*. If the final status is at tier 6, the player chooses one theme to lose (most appropriately a Self of Noise theme) and replaces it with a Mythos theme representing enlightenment such as **Zenlike Peace** (page 65) or the **Celestial Grace** theme kit on the next page; then remove the status.

The *enlightened* status helps with all actions to understand the kami and converse with them, and represents extreme clarity of thought and feeling that could be helpful to many actions, directly or indirectly, at your option. However, it also compels the character to find the kami and help them realize their masterplan for mankind, simply because the PC attains a complete and harmonious understanding of their benevolent will.

Reducing the status also removes the glowing substance from the PC's skin and vice versa, but it requires a Mythical approach.

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CELESTIAL GRACE

EXPOSURE MYTHOS

POWER TAGS

CELESTIAL GRACE

- *FULL COMMAND OVER MY BODY*
- *STRONGER AWAY FROM THE NOISE*
- *AURA OF REVERENCE*
- *GRANT WISDOM WITH WORDS*
- *PRECOGNITION*
- *SENSE BEYOND THE PHYSICAL*
- *SHINE WITH BLESSED LIGHT*
- *PERFECT SPATIAL AWARENESS*
- *SOFTLY HELP THEM LET GO*

WEAKNESS TAGS

- *DOWNPLAYS HUMAN NEEDS*
- *DISRUPTED BY NOISE*
- *ALOOF AND UNREACHABLE*
- *ATTRACTS CORRUPTIVE FORCES*

RITUAL

I must help realize the kami's will for humanity.

SPECIAL

Disarming Compassion: So long as you haven't acted violently or maliciously in a scene, whenever a human or human-controlled Challenge attacks you, they first take *remorseful-2*, which helps you mitigate their attack.

ACT III:

THE RUSH FOR ANSWERS

The crew now have the case, but they might still have many burning questions. They might decide to go hacking, hit the streets, or otherwise dig for details about their employers, the case they procured, or its origin.

The Bureau of Onmyō eventually shows up, headed by **Chief Inspector Ishikawa Rin** herself, to warn the crew about the dangerous substance in their possession. The Yatagarasu will also show some of her cards, in an attempt to get the crew on her side. The events of this act can occur at any order.

CONTACTING THE YATAGARASU

> Once online, the code you obtained from the case transforms into a three-legged crow and flies away into cyberspace. Soon, from that direction, another figure sweeps in on black wings. The avatar of the Yatagarasu appears as you saw her before, a Japanese woman in an ornate kimono with long black feathers in place of hair. This time she also has wide, black-feathered wings sweeping from her back that fold away and disappear as she lands.

The crew was instructed to confirm possession of the case by entering the Yatagarasu code into it. The output is yet another sting of code which, once uploaded into cyberspace, summons the Yatagarasu herself. The Yatagarasu appears as an avatar in VR, AR, or even in meatspace, a holographic projection of unknown source.

Now that the case is secured, the Yatagarasu continues to the next phase of the plan: securing the crew's support in transforming the Megacity forever. In this meeting, her goal is to convince the crew to aid her and to accurately determine if they are earnestly willing to do so. She will share what she knows as it serves these purposes.

THE INFORMATION

- The case holds a compound known as Junjō, an entheogen ("soul-liberating gift", as she calls it) in concentrated form. The substance channels the power of the Ame-no-ukihashi, bridging the gap between humanity and the gods. It is a gift from the Amatsu-kami, allowing mere mortals to transcend their human

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existence by rewriting their psyche, so that they become aware of the greater cosmos and ascend to the consciousness level of the heavens.

- Her employers' plan to release the entheogen to the citizens of the district and eventually the rest of Tokyo and Japan.
- Yatagarasu explains that once the case is brought to the target location, it will open by itself, "and the gift will be shared".
- Only when the Yatagarasu is satisfied that the crew is on her side will she reveal the target location: the Zen Garden Skybridge at The Tokyo Cascade.

THE CONVERSATION

- The Yatagarasu wishes the crew would see the pure truth of her masters' intentions and do what they're told without any doubts, but she is aware that mortal minds need time to adjust to these prospects.
- The Yatagarasu will ask plainly if the crew are ready to continue with the task, and take the conversation from there.
- If the crew seem skeptical, she will try to "open their eyes" to the gift that her employers want to give the Megacity denizens: the incredible opportunity of being among the first to have their consciousnesses opened to the world beyond. She does so wisely, by asking questions rather than making statements. Appeal to the PCs relevant Identities, Rituals, and Itches and to the misery they see in the dystopian world around them: wouldn't it all be better if more people were enlightened?
- Lying to the Yatagarasu always fails. She does not know the truth, but can tell when someone is lying to her. Twisting the truth is a dramatic action with a Quick outcome that is hindered by her *enlightened-4* (and by the *enlightened* status of the PC, if any).
- Questioning or reading the Yatagarasu is also a dramatic action (Quick or **Discover**) that is hindered by her *mysterious-3*, while tags that represent a PC's genuine interest or faith in the Mythoi are helpful.
- Consequences of either action could mean that the Yatagarasu grows *disappointed* (with a tier of your choice), or ends the discussion abruptly (**Deny Them Something They Want**).

THE OUTCOME

- If the crew genuinely side with her, she reveals the location to which Junjō must be taken to.
- If the PCs are unwilling to help or if she does not yet trust their intentions, the Yatagarasu suggests they take until the following sunset one day to come to terms with the realization that they could transcend and leave behind the world of petty material things.
- If the crew tells her truthfully that they do not wish to help her any further, she respects their choice but insists that they return the case to her. She will send a different courier to take it from them at the following sunset. She is hoping some time to process might help the crew come around.
- If they lie, for whatever reason, she calls them out on it and likewise insists on the return of the case.

DOING THE LEGWORK

RESEARCHING THE YATAGARASU

If the crew looks into the Yatagarasu (note her *mysterious-3*), they can uncover the following:

- The Yatagarasu not only appears as a divine messenger, but truly seems to have some divine powers. She can see through any lie and hide from any spy. She also seems entirely incorruptible, a true believer in her employers.
- She works for the **Hiruma-Miyaki Corporate Group** (HMCG), a big behind-the-scenes investor in cognitive science, cognitive psychology, parapsychology, religion studies, and sociology, developing techniques for inducing memory, emotions, and out-of-body experiences.
- HMCG's corporate headquarters are in the same district as Hikage, on the other side of the Megacity. Why then was the case not taken directly from one to the other, and instead brought here? (This hints at the Yatagarasu's plan to disperse the substance, if the PCs don't know it yet.)

STUDYING JUNGŌ

The crew may be curious about the case and its mysterious contents. Using scientific methods to study it will require access to a biochemistry lab (such as the one in the Canine Biolab), but the crew can also learn much through their arcane abilities or resources.

- The case was custom-made by specialists: it's made of a super-resilient alloy with in-built sensors which monitor both the contents and its surroundings. The touchpad is encrypted with military grade tech, or beyond.

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THE YATAGARASU

Ever since she visited the land bridge Amanohashidate years ago, the woman now known as the Yatagarasu has been a divine agent for the Amatsukami. Scrubbing her past identity from cyberspace and government records, she carries out missions for the Amatsukami with unquestioning faith, simply because she can see the good that will come out of it.

Seeing-the-light is a compelling status that drives the PC to help fulfill the Yatagarasu's plan (which could also lead them to mark Decay). *Remorseful* hinders mitigating *seeing-the-light*. Her *kami-guarded* applies to all harm: physical, Mythical, and digital.

LIMITS

HURT (CRASH) 5 | **BRIBE OR TURN –** | **TAKEOVER –** | **TRACE –**

TAGS & STATUSES

wings, *kami-guarded-3*, *mysterious-3*, *enlightened-4*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Turn her head like an inquisitive crow*

› *Look someone over with an intensity that see through to their soul*

» **Highlight how a problem or wrong could be better if people were enlightened (*seeing-the-light-3*)**

» **Evoke memories of one's long-forgotten innocence (*seeing-the-light-3*)**

» **Confront someone with how their selfishness or limited worldview is making it worse for everyone (*remorseful-3*)**

» **Heal someone of an affliction or wound, emotional or physical (even through cyberspace) (remove the negative status and give *seeing-the-light-3*)**

› *Move with unearthly grace*

» **Strike with lightning speed (*broken-bones-4*) or accurately throw a knife to fatally wounds someone (*bleeding-out-4*)**

» **Find steady footing or take to the air (gain *superior-positioning-4*)**

› *Spread her wings*

» **Fly away to avoid capture (Deny Them Something They Want)**

» **Her signal or trail suddenly drops (Deny Them Something They Want)**

- The substance within is a biochemical compound, similar to an entheogen native to Japan called hikageshibiretake ("shadow numbness mushroom"), but there are several differences. The original is usually ingested, but this version was engineered to also work through contact with skin or when inhaled.
- An entheogen is a kind of psychoactive substance that induces altered states of consciousness, usually employed in religious or ritual contexts.
- (Source-Touched methods) Whoever designed this case must have been divinely inspired, as it is kept closed by a magical sacred seal blessed by some truly powerful kami. It resists all attempts to open it.

Deeper investigation requires a test subject who has become *enlightened* and may reveal the following:

- The mysterious substance is Mythos-infused. It creates a spiritual bridge between the subject's soul on earth and heaven: the Ame-no-ukihashi.
- Heaven in this case is Takamagahara, a celestial realm in which reside the Amatsukami spirits, divine protectors of Japan.
- The Amatsukami have been cut off from the mortal realm for eons, but always keep some followers around Japan to report to them and act in their name.
- Their plan seems to be benevolent, at least in its intentions. They wish to see humanity transcend its petty attachments and attain a higher level of consciousness, connectedness, and harmony.

HIKAGE PHARMACEUTICALS SERVER

The Hikage Pharmaceuticals Domain manifests as an immense fungal garden that dwarfs the bug-sized crew, watched over by an **Intrusion Countermeasure AI** (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 308) shaped as a praying mantis. Data stored in this secure server can reveal the following:

- The substance in the case was named Junjō ("pure heart") because supposedly those with a pure heart can see the Ame-no-ukihashi, a mythic bridge that connected the earth and the heavens. The legend says many years ago the bridge collapsed and formed part of Kyoto.
- Junjō is an experimental entheogen, a kind of psychoactive substance that induces altered states of consciousness, usually employed in religious or ritual contexts. It is made from a newly discovered fungus in the Psilocybe genus that only grows under pine trees from the Amanohashidate Sandbar in Kyoto Prefec-

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ture. This canister contains the only concentrated liquid version produced so far. It can be aerosolized and affect subjects through contact or inhalation.

- Clinical tests indicate that subjects who have been exposed to miniscule amounts experience divine visions of gods, most often of the Amatsukami, the gods of the heavens. No physical side effects were notable aside from heightened neural activity, increasing reasoning and memory tasks. The canister was stolen before stage 2 tests could be conducted.

TRACING THE CASE BACK TO THE IRIBE-GUMI

If the crew decides to investigate further into the job that Habu was doing for the Yatagarasu, their actions can yield the contact information for **Takibi** ("the bonfire"), the Iribe-gumi wakagashira who was in charge of Habu. If they can convince Takibi they have the sought-after case, or knowledge of Habu's death, a virtual meeting can be arranged.

> The prearranged cyberspace meeting space is a virtual sake bar populated by automated patrons sharing bottles and playing quiet games of chance. When your contact appears there is no mistaking him: a shirtless man with Yakuza tattoos covering nearly his entire torso and onto his neck and arms. He moves with deadly grace, and everything about him screams "annihilation", emphasized by the flames where his avatar's eyes should be. He takes a seat at a small table, after which his followers allow you to approach and sit as well. His arms folded, his back straight, he looks at you, unblinking.

The meeting can be played out as a tracked outcome to *convince:4* Takibi that the crew is not responsible for Habu's death, or he might already be aware that the Maikubi-kai were involved. If needed, use the stats for **Criminal Overlord** (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 306) for Takibi, and **Syndicate Leg Breaker** (*Metro:Otherscape*, page 307) for his bodyguards, all with the Iribe-gumi Power Set.

Infuriated by the news that Habu is dead, Takibi is willing to trade information to find out what Habu died for. Here's what he knows:

- Habu's job involved breaking into Hikage Pharmaceuticals in Kyoto, stealing a substance called Junjō and putting it inside a special case provided by the Yatagarasu.



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- It is unknown what the Junjō is as that was not part of the briefing, but they were being paid well not to ask questions.
- After the theft the case was to be taken to the Ghost Market.
- The Maikubi-kai somehow became aware of Habu's courier job, but are likely in the dark about the contents.
- News about Habu and the case, and the crew's interference, is already making the rounds, and the Maikubi-kai now think it's a weapon and intend to get the case back from the crew. To that end, they have mobilized their members to hunt the crew down.

Whether they like it or not, the crew is now caught in a Yakuza gang war. Should the crew ask for it, Takibi can have some of the Iribe-gumi help them keep the case out of the hands of the Maikubi-kai. Favors might need to be exchanged, honor might need to be satisfied, but this all will happen later. The case must be dealt with first.

If the meeting goes well, the crew can forge a temporary alliance with the Iribe-gumi. If it goes wrong, they now have both the Iribe-gumi and Maikubi-kai after them, which will have consequences during the next act.

ENTER THE ONMYŌJI

A hovercar appears as if out of nowhere a few meters up, descending toward the ground. The lingerings of what must be some stealth field crackle over the surface of the car.

The car has barely touched down when the door swings open and a serious-looking official steps out, with the movements of someone who has been doing this for many years. She scans the surroundings with a piercing gaze before zeroing in on you.

"Chief Inspector Ishikawa," she says by way of introduction, striding toward you. An ethereal fox-like spirit jumps out of the car, following her. "We need to talk."

Some time after the crew retrieves the case, perhaps after they've already begun their own investigation, they detect many **Yōkai-Tracking Drones** (page 157) active in their neighborhood. Their directive is to locate the case and those who have absconded with it.

The Bureau of Onmyō picked up chatter about Junjō and did a hasty threat assessment, collecting information about the heist at Hikage Pharmaceuticals and the events in the Hungry Dog. They came to the conclusion that crew are probably not fully aware of what they are carrying or for whom, and therefore **Chief Inspector Ishikawa Rin** (page 155) herself makes contact with them, to have a conversation. She wishes to inform them about the dangerous substance they are carrying, assess their strength and motives, and give them a chance to surrender the case to the Bureau. She is accompanied by her shikigami (page 157).

Ishikawa will keep business-like, and be clear that her purpose in this meeting is to convince the crew that opening the case is a bad idea. To her, this is a negotiation meeting that she won't escalate to open hostilities; that could come later, depending on the outcome of the talks.

THE INFORMATION

If there are any gaps in the crew's knowledge, Ishikawa will be able to fill them with the following information (no roll needed). Use the Chief Inspector to fill up any blanks the players might have or confirm their theories.

- The Bureau is aware that the crew was employed by the Hiruma-Miyaki Corporate Group (HMCG), which they believe is a front of the Amatsukami, spirits of Takamagahara, the realm of heaven. They are also aware that the Junjō substance seems to be a Source of a related Mythoi.
- The Amatsukami are likely to try to spread the substance to cause a "mass involuntary transcendence event", awakening the unsuspecting population of Tokyo. Which is just as crazy as it sounds, but that's how kami are. It's also an irreversible, society-transforming event that must be prevented from happening. Ishikawa is not sure where the substance is supposed to be released from.
- The Bureau's job is to maintain a balance between heaven and earth so as to allow human affairs to continue harmoniously. The Chief can't deny things are far from harmonious on earth at the moment, but she is adamant that allowing heaven to completely change the nature of humanity will only lead to a greater imbalance. The kami must be kept in check.
- The Bureau's drones have detected a surge in the number of tengu mercenaries in the district. She can explain what a tengu is (see Kaze Security Trooper, page 121). The Bureau believes the Amatsukami will use the tengu to acquire the Junjō, or perhaps spread it from the air somehow.
- The Bureau aims to take the Junjō where it can be safely sealed away for eternity. Ishikawa will not reveal where this is or how the sealing will occur, not until she is sure that the crew are on her side.

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The following information Ishikawa keeps to herself; some of it can be surmised by a shrewd character, and the rest she can be convinced to share it during the conversation.

- The inspector won't say so outright, but the truth is that the crew have so far proven themselves more capable than most of her inspectors who might be available, not that there are many. She doesn't have the numbers or quality of manpower to guard the case on transit, and needs the crew to do it for her.
- The substance must be taken to the **House of Zen** (a smaller, local version of their House of Kami, page 154), which is the Zen Garden Skybridge at The Tokyo Cascade. Statues with sealed yōkai are kept there, hidden in plain sight. The bridge was chosen because it is a mystical focal point, with enough power to bind dangerous Sources such as this.
- Specifically, it currently hosts a sealed Source of the Mythos of Amenonuhoko ("The Heavenly Jeweled Spear"). If released from its stone prison, the spear could be used to nullify the mythic power of Junjō, so it can be sealed or possibly even destroyed.
- A PC with appropriate Esoteric knowledge can infer the spear can also be used to boost the power of the Junjō, as the Amatsukami plan to do. If they share it with Ishikaw, she is impressed (and makes a note to keep watch on them).

THE OUTCOME

- If the crew offers to side with the Onmyōji and the Chief believes they are trustworthy, she either orders them with authority, inspires them with a dramatic speech, or hires them (whatever she thinks will be more persuasive) to handle this for her, and provides the details of her plan (as given above).
- If any crew members are onboard with the kami's plan or even contemplating it (such as PCs affected by the *enlightened* or *seeing-the-light* statuses) and Ishikawa becomes aware of it, she will try to dissuade them, asking them if they are truly ready to transform into an existence they know nothing about. Appeal to the PCs' Identities, Itches, as well as Rituals of Mythoi that may oppose the Amatsukami, such as corruptive Mythoi. Are the PCs really ready to let go of it all? Are they ready to make the same decision for millions of people?
- If the crew asks for more time, Ishikawa will leave them to think and find corroborating evidence to confirm what she has said. But, she promises while leaving, she *will* be expecting an answer. She expects the Amatsukami to make a move around nightfall (the next day, if it's nighttime).
- If the crew decline, she will insist they give her the case, as a matter of Megacity security. If they refuse, she doesn't not become hostile, but leaves them with a warning that she will be back for the case very soon and that she won't be alone – in meatspace, cyberspace, or Otherscape.

TIME TO CHOOSE A SIDE

> In the midst of all this, you catch a glimpse of the Megacity: a VR view of the bustling cyberspace Tangle, corporate security arresting a homeless man, or the zooming of swarms of drones over the neon-lit skyline. Millions caught in the same pattern, over and over again, largely unaware of a world beyond their own, drowning in the Noise. Can any of this be redeemed? Is it worth saving? Or is the Yatagarasu right, and it's time for people to transcend all this? With every passing minute, the moment of choice draws nearer.

Before continuing to the next act, the crew might need to reach a decision. Both the Yatagarasu and Chief Inspector Ishikawa press for the crew to choose their side: either to help the Yatagarasu release the biochemical Source, or to help the Bureau of Onmyō seal it away forever. Of course, the crew could do neither, trying to play both sides or planning to use or destroy the Junjō themselves.

The crew's decision and how they communicate it to the other involved parties determines who will support them and who will go after them when they try to move the case in the next Act. Guide the crew by asking for a group decision, and play on their motivations as a crew or as individuals.

DOWNTIME AND LOADING UP

As the fateful part of the job approaches, the PCs can take a little time to rest and prepare. This is a good time to announce a Downtime montage followed by a Loading Up moment. Perhaps the PCs plan how to bring the case to the Tokyo Cascade by looking at their possible routes there and preparing accordingly.

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ACT IV:

THE CHASE

The crew are about to make their way to the Tokyo Cascade, hunted every step of the way by the parties that wish to stop them.

The possible routes from the crew's meeting place to the tower depend on the crew's starting point and their access to vehicles and transportation. Approaches by air, land, or tunnel are the most likely routes; also, ascending the tower to the Zen Garden Skybridge may be achieved by flying, climbing, or up the elevators or staircase (especially, if the crew has a Kumo Crawler, page 234). Creating a portal is difficult as the tower is warded by top Onmyōji spells, and these become stronger the closer the portal opens to the Zen Garden Skybridge; however, you may opt to resolve such a plan as a tracked *ritual:6* instead of a chase.

Cinematically, the chase occurs in one or two of these moments, at your choice. These scenes offer a chance to showcase districts in your version of the Megacity, so consider placing them in unique locations.

- The crew is chased out of their sanctuary by an assault
- The enemy catches up with the crew midway to the Cascade
- The crew come up to an ambush just as the Cascade is within sight

Set a *catch/outrun* Limit for each chase (see **Overcoming Challenges**, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 107). The Challenges the crew face depend on the outcome of the previous Act.

- Parties that are going after the PC and the case will feature in the scene as Challenges. This is almost always true for the Maikubi-kai, who are out to get the case for themselves, unless the PCs found a way to work things out with them.
- Parties that are supporting the PC will feature as story tags that the PCs can use to their advantage. The PCs can command or request specific support from these units as an action, and **Create** tags such as *covering fire*, *distraction*, or *road block*, or **Enhance** themselves with statuses like *warded* or *accelerated*, depending on the abilities of their allies. If the PCs are heavily outgunned, consider granting additional story tags without a roll.

The Scale of these Challenges or story tags is left to your assessment of what the crew can handle. As a baseline, all units are Scale 2, with the exceptions of the shikigami, inugami, and tsuchigumo who are at Scale 1. Remember also that collectives can be split and merged during the scene.

GOING OFF MISSION

If the crew have made plans other than going to the Tokyo Cascade, the chase will still happen, but with both sides pursuing the crew. You can still have a final showdown, where the crew is trapped between both forces: Chief Inspector Ishikawa with a dozen onmyō-ji, and the Yatagarasu with just as many tengu. If the crew survive and escape with the case, it is a fitting end to the affair as both opposing parties will realize they have to reconsider their next steps.

CROW TENGU MURDER

The Amatsukami have granted the Yatagarasu the ability to conjure a host of karasu-tengu (crow tengu) from the shadows of the Megacity. Each appears as a flitting shadow, but they rarely move alone, instead gathering in a silent murder.

LIMITS

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 **BANISH 2** **OUTRUN 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

weak in light, *wings of gossamer shadow*, Scale 2

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Manifest from shadows*
» **Create an illusory sound (*howling sounds*) or conjure a wind (*gusts of wind*)**

› *Cry to the sky*
» **Alert Shinogi Security of the PCs' presence (Present a New Challenge: Iribe-gumi Security Guard with Scale 1)**

› *Gather in countless wings of shadow over someone*
» **Rip with solid shadow talons (*bleeding-2*)**
» **Put a bystander in danger (Escalate the Situation)**

› *Fly upward and gather tighter*
» **Release a tengubi, a small fireball that splits in mid-air (*burned-2* to several targets)**
» **Conjure a *tengu tsubute*, invisible boulders or gravel that fall from the sky (*concussed-2* or *blinded-2*)**
» **Regenerate in dark shadows (reset *hurt*)**

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NEXT-GEN WEAPONIZED AUTOGYRO

The Next Generation Weaponized Autogyro is a rotorcraft in use by the Iribe-gumi Syndicate. Unlike a helicopter, it must always be forward moving, although recent technology has enabled ultra-short takeoff distances. The armored cockpit is enclosed, affording the pilot protection.

LIMITS

WRECK 3 **CATCH/OUTRUN 3**

TAGS & STATUSES

always moving, *armored*, *heat-seeking missile*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *Align weapons on a target*
» **Fire a cluster of micro-missiles (***wrecked-3* **or** *severe-burns-3***)**
» **Fire front-mounted machine gun (***bullet-wounds-2***)**

› *Release a heat-seeking missile*
» **The missile hits (***battered-4***)**

› *Speed after a target*
» **Catch up to a target (gain** *catch-2***)**

THE BUREAU'S FORCES

Onmyōji Inspectors (page 156) in *Bureau Patrol Vehicles* (**Vehicle Piloting** Power Set, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 329)

Shikigami (page 157)

Yōkai-Tracking Drones (page 157)

THE YATAGARASU'S FORCES

Shinogi Security (**Security Guard**, *Metro:Otherscape*, page 305 with the **Iribe-gumi** Power Set, page 227)

Next-Gen Weaponized Autogyros

Thick and impenetrable tropical foliage.

Crow Tengu Murder

JUST BREWING TROUBLE

Maikubi-kai Leg Breakers (**Syndicate Leg Breakers**, *Metro :Otherscape*, page 307, with the **Maikubi-kai** Power Set, page 227)

Bōsōzoku Riders (page 124)

Inugami (page 226)

ACT V:

A BRIDGE TO HEAVEN

THE TOKYO CASCADE

The Tokyo Cascade is not the tallest building in Tokyo, but it's the tallest in its district, which is a densely-populated mixed neighborhood. Closer to the Cascade, one finds corporate offices, gated communities, and plush tourist attractions securely separated from the poorer residential buildings and low-cost coffin hotels further out. Standing far above the rooftops, the two towers of gleaming bronze, each eighty stories high, overshadow the busy Cascade Plaza. The Zen Garden Skybridge connects the two towers on the 71st floor (noting that in Japan the fourth floor is labeled fifth, so technically the skybridge is on the 70th). A massive holographic waterfall is projected as falling from the Skybridge using camouflaged emitters on the bridge and down the sides of the East and West Towers.

The buildings host several companies, all part of the same zaibatsu, and all on good terms with the Bureau of Onmyō, who has offices here (to secretly oversee their House of Zen).

There are helipads on the top, and the underground levels are divided into parking, warehouses, and further retail space, and connect to other nearby buildings via subterranean pedestrian tunnels.

ATTACK IN CASCADE PLAZA

Cascade Plaza is always crowded with tourists, from other parts of Tokyo or from abroad, who delight in walking through the holographic waterfall. The waterfall projection is sometimes modified with cinematic ads or installations, and permits are issued to street vendors and food trucks around the square. The plaza is expansive and surrounded by squat commerce centers. There are no other skyscrapers within a two-block radius.

The Bureau has hidden an extraordinary defense measure beneath the plaza, a demonicly-infused heavy-ordnance-carrying **Asura-Powered Tank**. They consider it an ace up their sleeve, but the Yatagarasu is aware of its existence. Using Amatsukami-class magic she is capable of connecting with the asura, at great effort.

When the crew approaches the Tokyo Cascade, the group who opposes them activates the tank as a last line of defense, to try and take down the crew at all costs. The damage to vehicles, buildings and civilians is going to be severe; use it to show how far the opposition is ready to go to prevent the Junjō from being released or sealed.

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The paved floor of Cascade Plaza breaks and tears apart, revealing a hidden opening beneath, growing wider as tourists scramble to safety and underground electrical cables break with a shower of sparks. A huge shape rises from the opening: it's a full-on tank, and its powerful chassis is topped by the upper body of a shining, red, multi-armed and multi-faced figure. The three faces chant in Sanskrit, then one of them stares at you as all three voices speak simultaneously. "Access to this location is denied."

ASURA-POWERED TANK

The Asura-Powered Tank is an armored combat vehicle imbued with a Mythos of one of the Indic asuras. The Source is a man-sized statue which sits inside the turret, heavily protected by the armor, controlling the tank's movements and arsenal. The asura is itself under the control of a sorcerer who performed ritualistic sacrifice of a personal symbol of power or wealth to bind it; the sorcerer will not be making an appearance in the scene and they don't need to, since the asura is obedient and follows the orders it has already been given.

The asura's three-faced manifestation surveys its surroundings with piercing eyesight, while its six arms can catch projectiles or mystically redirect magic back at its source.

LIMITS

HURT OR WRECK 6 | **BANISH 5** | **SHUTDOWN 5** | **TAKE OVER –**

TAGS & STATUSES

heavy armor, *massive tracks*, *alert-3*, *divine-protection-3*, Scale 1

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

Force of Destruction: Whenever the Tank delivers a Consequence, also **Make the Future Bleaker** due to collateral damage.

› *Recite mantras as it scans its surroundings with its three sets of eyes*
» **Identify a target and fire missile (remove all stealthiness statuses, remove all tags of cover, and inflict *wrecked-4* or *pulverized-4*)**

› *Rumble over obstacles, crushing them*
» **Roll over someone (*crushed-5*)**
» **Arrive at a superior position (gain *superior-position-2*)**

› *Canon turns to face target*
» **Fire Asura-powered laser (*demolished-5* or *charred-holes-5*)**

» **Catch a projectile and throw it back, or reflect a magical attack (on a miss, inflict the status that would be dealt to it back at the attacker or another target)**

ZEN GARDEN SKYBRIDGE

Wide holographic displays serve as a surprisingly tasteful embellishment around the huge wall-spanning windows of the skybridge, giving a breathtaking (and somewhat disconcerting) view of the district. In the hands of an unimaginative custodian, the skybridge could have been just a long tube, but the owner has instead filled it with a stunning array of plants and statues, in a design that is pleasing to the eye and seems to even soothe the soul. No wonder, as the Bureau of Onmyō must maintain a perfect feng-shui balance in this hidden prison of theirs.

Normally there would be tourists milling around but the fighting outside has led to a building-wide evacuation. All that's left is soothing music that seems to be playing to no one. In the emptiness, it's possible to feel the air crackle with an uncomfortable energy.

The Zen Garden Skybridge is a grand, tubular walkway/exhibition that connects the East and West Towers of the Tokyo Cascade. It is also a secret House of Zen of the Bureau of Onmyō's, where yōkai and other mythical threats are sealed into statues and kept in plain sight.

The Skybridge is a popular tourist attraction with an entrance fee, and two express public elevators in the East Tower go from the ground floor to its level. In the West Tower, the Bureau controls two staff-only access elevators. Stairwells are protected by emergency doors rigged to an *alarm system*, which are also locked from the stairwell side. The Skybridge walkway has no entrances from the outside, and much of it is made of *reinforced windows* that give visitors a grand view of the urban landscape.

The walkway hides holographic projection systems as well as secret assets of the Bureau. Various defensive charms and spells have been cast on the House of Zen, preventing anyone from magically transporting themselves to any space within three floors above and below the Skybridge with a *spell against teleportation*. Several *hidden sigils* are disrupting the flow of all spells except for those used by the onmyōji, creating *Bureau-magical interference-2*.

Someone is waiting here: the leader of the opposition: either the **Chief Inspector Ishikawa Rin** (page 155), or the **Yatagarasu** (page 308), finally appearing in the flesh.

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THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

It's time to finish the job. Depending on the crew's earlier decisions they will be trying to either release the Junjō compound or seal it away. They will have to complete the following Challenge, with their opponent trying to prevent this from happening.

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

LIMITS

SPREAD/SEAL 4

TAGS & STATUSES

hidden sigils, *spell against teleportation*, *Bureau-magical-interference-2*

›THREATS / »CONSEQUENCES

› *The Yatagarasu lifts a hand to make some of the Junjō drift toward a PC*
» **The substance touches the PC (*enlightened-6*)**

› *Onmyōji mystical chimes are heard over the din of battle*
» **The Bureau reinforce their sigils or seal away one of the Yatagarasu's minions (renew base tags or burn a tag representing aid to the crew)**

› *The opposition forces start the next step in their plan or push forward on the crew's side to disrupt them*
» **The crew's side loses the Spear or the briefcase (Escalate the Situation)**
» **The crew's ritual is disrupted, or the opposition side's ritual is progressing (*spread-1* or *seal-1*)**

› *A vision of the kami's realm becomes briefly visible through the holographic waterfall, its presence growing*
» **In the presence of heaven, Takamagahara, a PC comes to know new truths (*enlightened-6*)**
» **Divine protection blesses the Yatagarasu and her cause (she and her minions gains *kami-guarded-2*)**

» **The security systems become more aggressive (add a security-related story tag to the scene such as *gun turrets*, *foam fire suppressant*, or *wireless jammer*)**

» **A massive outpouring of magical energy is released (*cursed-3* or *blasted-3* in an area, or burn a Mythical tag)**

Whichever the opposition is, they are accompanied by a Scale 2 group of minions: **Onmyōji Inspectors** (page 156) or **Crow Tengu Murder** (page 312). Neither woman will fight to the death of her entire side, and neither is interested in seeing the skybridge itself destroyed. They both know the greater battle is yet to be won. If it seems like they're about to lose, the opponent will say some final words ("This isn't over.") and escape on black wings or in a flying car.

When the scene begins, the opposition has just finished releasing the spear from its statue form. They have **Amenonuhoko** ("The Heavenly Jeweled Spear"), while the crew probably has the briefcase. Either side needs to put their hands on both these items in order to advance their plans, meaning there will be plenty of back-and-forth while the two opposing sides snatch them from each other.

When it comes to advancing their side's plan, the crew's contact – Chief Inspector Ishikawa or the Yatagarasu – will provide all the guidance needed. Even if they are not present, they will guide the PCs through the ritual via AR, earpieces, or any other remote communication device. Direct help, such as from an *Onmyōji Inspectors* team, might be invaluable in certain parts, like when creating the warding circle needed to reseal the Spear (see below).

The ritual is represented with the *spread/seal:4* polar Limit. As the statuses stack up, describe the rituals going through their steps. When tiers are removed from the Limit, describe the other side disrupting it, forcing the step to be repeated in order to complete the ritual.

Spreading the Junjō: To *spread* the Junjō, first the Jeweled Spear's head needs to be thoroughly coated with the substance, and then it needs to be thrown through the *reinforced windows* as powerful prayers are said over it. The spear then circles in the air, dancing as if led by an invisible hand while the Yatagarasu chants, and begins raining a mist of Junjō on the district, a process that takes several minutes. The Jeweled Spear can't be broken, but its magic could be suppressed, it could be captured, or the Yatagarasu could be stopped in order to stop the spread midway.

Sealing the Junjō: To *seal* the Junjō, the Amenonuhoko's head needs to be coated with some of it, and then placed in a warding circle, empowered with powerful mantras or by stamping ofuda talismans, in order to reseal it into a stone statue. It's enough for a sample of the substance to be sealed along with the spear, and the rest will lose its magical power and become inert.

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AFTERMATH

However things ended, the consequences should be lasting.

- **If the Junjō was successfully sealed away,** the Amatsukami take a step back. Clearly humanity was not ready for their gift. Or perhaps some other force intervened? The gods of heaven will send some of their loyal servants to spy on the crew for several months, to see if they are perhaps under some corrupting influence. They might turn to **Great King Enma** (page 168) and ask him to test the crew. The Chief Inspector, meanwhile, is probably impressed enough with the crew to turn to them again with future delicate matters, and perhaps offer some of them a job in the Bureau. Whenever the crew face injustice and the corruption of mankind, remind them of the choice they made to shun enlightenment.
- **If the Junjō was released from the skybridge,** tens of thousands in the district will be transformed like the techs in the Maikubi-kai labs, with the entire district being quarantined by the Nano-butai. Even more dramatically, an invisible, permanent bridge will open from the Tokyo Cascade into the spirit realm, with many curious kami emerging from it. Yōkai problems are about to get a *lot* worse in the district and around it. Further in the future, the Amatsukami will begin to act against the Nano-butai in an attempt to open the quarantine zone, which becomes a celestially-advanced model of an enlightened society, but nevertheless contends with appropriately spiritual problems.
- **If the Junjō was opened, but not fully released,** a few hundred people around the towers are transformed and the bridge fails to materialize. The Amatsukami realize the people are too distracted to be able to elevate themselves above the Noise, and begin to devise a more physical ascension. They start investing in construction companies, aiming to build a space elevator anchored on top of Mount Fuji, with its other end reaching into the heavens. The Yatagarasu will offer the crew to become their permanent employer, while the Chief Inspector keeps a close eye on them.



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APPENDICES

CHALLENGES & POWER SETS IN THIS BOOK

RATING	CHALLENGE NAME	PAGE
+⊕	Akinosuke Recruiter	217
+⊕	Ari	218
+⊕	Bot Sympathizer	139
+⊕	Casual Dreamer	218
+⊕	Hanko Enthusiast	230
+⊕	Hive-Linked	140
+⊕	Horimono	227
+⊕	Ishoku-Nano Paint	140
+⊕	Kami-Blessed	136
+⊕	Ki Sensitive	136
+⊕	Light Slinger	208
+⊕	Local To Ward	132
+⊕	Mounted Gunslinger	133
+⊕	Ninjutsu Student	165
+⊕	Nitōryū Dual Wielder	134
+⊕	Ofuda Arsenal	136
+⊕	Ōgama-Implanted	199
+⊕	Oni Masked	190
+⊕	Otaku	134
+⊕	Peace-Keeping	134
+⊕	Ritual-Honoring Fighter	135

RATING	CHALLENGE NAME	PAGE
+⊕	Samurai-Protected	183
+⊕	Shurikenjutsu Expert	135
+⊕	Street Fighting	135
+⊕	Supplicant Of King Enma	175
+⊕	Tainted	137
+⊕	Tamatebako Plugger	141
+⊕	Tanren Ascetic	138
+⊕	Tech Artisan	141
+⊕	Trigger-Poisoner	141
+⊕	Uncanny Bare-Hands Warrior	138
+⊕(⊕)	Extra Limbs	139
+⊕(⊕)	Iribe-Gumi	227
+⊕(⊕)	Kyūdō Marksmanship Technique	132
+⊕(⊕)	Maikubi-Kai	227
+⊕(⊕)	Master-Crafted	132
+⊕(⊕)	Mountain Of Muscle	133
+⊕(⊕)	Shape-Changing	137
+⊕(⊕)	Swordmaster	135
+⊕⊕	Exoskeleton Operator	139
+⊕⊕	Nanite-Shrouded	140
+⊕⊕	Oni Rider	190

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RATING	CHALLENGE NAME	PAGE
+◈◈	Zen-Enlightened	138
◈	Cybernetic Rat	110
◈	Reanimated Skeleton	197
◈	Yosuzume Kei Teen	116
◈(◈)	Skywatcher	208
◈◈	Aka Manto, Social Media Slasher	114
◈◈	Android Secretary	123
◈◈	Ashigaru	182
◈◈	Bōsōzoku Rider	124
◈◈	Crow Tengu Murder	312
◈◈	Ghost Market Dealer	163
◈◈	Hen'i Ants	243
◈◈	Karakuri Attendant	254
◈◈	Kawaii Mask Assassin	233
◈◈	Kenko Boundary Security System	277
◈◈	Murahachibu Bar	102
◈◈	Navigating The Underground Discharge Channel	266
◈◈	Nezumi Punk	111
◈◈	Ningyo	108
◈◈	Oni VR Construct	128
◈◈	Rakugoka Virus	98
◈◈	Riku And Riyo's Cybernetic Clinic	103
◈◈	Searching The Coffin Complex	269
◈◈	Shikigami	157
◈◈	Tanuki Vendor	104
◈◈	Tezuma Magician	235
◈◈	Time Flow Firewall	198
◈◈	Tokoyo Villager Mob	247
◈◈	Yōkai-Tracking Drone	157
◈◈◈	Akkorokamui Tentacle	105
◈◈◈	Ari Code Swarm	216
◈◈◈	Backhoe Loader Tsukumogami	268
◈◈◈	Stillwater Ronin	117
◈◈◈	Bokuba Goblin	115
◈◈◈	Chirizuka Kaiō, King Of Trash	271
◈◈◈	Datastream Kraken	257
◈◈◈	Disguised Nightclouder Hacker	258
◈◈◈	Dojo Brawler	125
◈◈◈	Failed Baku Hybrid	255
◈◈◈	Five Rings Officer	126
◈◈◈	Five Rings One-Night Castle	118
◈◈◈	Funayurei-Haunted Office Complex	101
◈◈◈	Inugami	226
◈◈◈	Jorogumo	106
◈◈◈	Jubokko	106
◈◈◈	King Enma's Trial	175
◈◈◈	Kitsune	119
◈◈◈	Kubire-Oni	102

RATING	CHALLENGE NAME	PAGE
◈◈◈	Maramatch	116
◈◈◈	Meido	275
◈◈◈	Mizuchi	291
◈◈◈	Mutant Red Panda	281
◈◈◈	Nano-Butai Decontaminator	278
◈◈◈	Nano-Butai Trooper	128
◈◈◈	Neo-Samurai	182
◈◈◈	Next-Gen Weaponized Autogyro	313
◈◈◈	Nightclouders	254
◈◈◈	Nozawa Emiko	284
◈◈◈	Ōgama Trooper	197
◈◈◈	Oni Tormentor	173
◈◈◈	Onmyōji Inspector	156
◈◈◈	Onryō	123
◈◈◈	Security Trap-Jaw Ant-Bot	248
◈◈◈	Sundog	207
◈◈◈	Tesso, The Iron Rat	110
◈◈◈	The Negotiations	294
◈◈◈	Tsuchigumo (Iribe-Gumi)	226
◈◈◈	Tsukumogami Swarm Attack	267
◈◈◈	Uchiwa Corporate Bank	105
◈◈◈	Up The Spire	282
◈◈◈	Yakubyō Gami Roamers	237
◈◈◈	Yuki-Onna	100
◈◈◈(◈)	Court Functionary	173
◈◈◈(◈)	Ghost Market Enforcer	164
◈◈◈(◈)	Kami, Gentle Soul	107
◈◈◈(◈)	Oni Gangster	189
◈◈◈(◈)	Sōhei IC	129
◈◈◈(◈◈)	Sōma Clan Reanimator	198
◈◈◈◈	Chief Inspector Ishikawa	155
◈◈◈◈	Giant Koi Fish	281
◈◈◈◈	Icon	126
◈◈◈◈	Kageari	215
◈◈◈◈	Kaze Security Trooper	122
◈◈◈◈	Kumo Crawler	234
◈◈◈◈	Sagawa Endō	183
◈◈◈◈	Saitō Naoko	217
◈◈◈◈	Seiryū	164
◈◈◈◈	The Bridge Between Heaven And Earth	315
◈◈◈◈	The Yatagarasu	308
◈◈◈◈	Umibōzu Nano Swarm	112
◈◈◈◈	Venerated Sensei	130
◈◈◈◈	Yakubyō Gami	284
◈◈◈◈	Yamanba	99
◈◈◈◈(◈)	Elder Kitsune	121
◈◈◈◈(◈)	Mecha	127
◈◈◈◈(◈)	Kami, Wild Soul	108

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RATING	CHALLENGE NAME	PAGE
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Asura-Powered Tank	314
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Daytime Darkness	206
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Gashadokuro	197
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Kokuō	216
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Mamushi-Sama	226
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Ogre-King Hayao	190
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Rat Tower	111
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Shimyo	174
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	Wanyūdō Wandering Tank	113
⟐⟐⟐⟐⟐	White Bird	165

THEMEKITS IN THIS BOOK

TITLE	TYPE	PAGE
Anti-Nanite Gear	Cutting Edge	66
AR Gamer	Cyberspace	66
Briefcase Weapon	Cutting Edge	67
Budō Practitioner	Expertise	54
Bushi Aspirant	Horizon	54
Celestial Grace	Exposure	306
Claim Birthright	Horizon	55
Cleanse The Past	Horizon	55
Enhanced Clone	Augmentation	67
Eye-Catching Projections	Augmentation	68
Figurine Of Corruption	Artifact	60
Ghost Market Vendor	Affiliation	167
Giant Combat Mecha	Drones	68
Hanko Seal Magic	Esoterica	60
Harmonious Leader	Personality	56
Helpful Ghost	Companion	61
Holographic Companion	Drones	69
Karmic Decree	Exposure	61
Kenjutsu	Expertise	56
Kitsune Charm Of Trickery	Artifact	62
Kumo Pilot	Drones	69
Laser-Edged Katana	Cutting Edge	70
Legendary Weaponsmith	Esoterica	62
Nanite Veteran	Troubled Past	57
Neo-Samurai Armor	Assets	57
Ninjutsu Training	Esoterica	167
Ōgama-Bound	Exposure	200
Oni Mask	Artifact	63
Onmyōdō	Esoterica	63
Otaku	Personality	58
Precocious Youth	Personality	58
Prince Of Trash	Exposure	271
Shikigami	Companion	64
Skywatchers	Affiliation	209
Spirit Form	Exposure	64
Sundog Suit	Cutting Edge	70
Synthetic Body	Cutting Edge	71
Tamatebako Plugger	Cyberspace	71
Tezuma Magic	Esoterica	65
Tokoyo Uplink	Cutting Edge	219
Yakuza Membership	Affiliation	59
Yōkai Slayer	Expertise	59
Zenlike Peace	Exposure	65

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