
Legend of the Five Rings
ROLEPLAYING
WHEEL OF JUDGMENT
AN ADVENTURE IN THE UNDERWORLD

Wheel of Judgment

Wheel of Judgment is an adventure for the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*, designed for characters who have met their end in the Mortal Realm. It offers players the opportunity to earn a second chance, return to Ningen-dō, and continue the lives they lost.

This adventure takes place in the underworld, including Meido, the Realm of Waiting; Jigoku, the Realm of Evil; and Gaki-dō, the Realm of Hungry Dead. PCs may witness disturbing sights in the Realm of Evil and face experiences unlike anything in Rokugan. Of course, the GM can tone down—or increase—the horror elements as appropriate for their players.

As the PCs learn, everyone and everything in Rokugan must eventually pass through the Realm of Waiting. Additional information about the underworld can be found in *Celestial Realms*, but that supplement is not necessary to play *Wheel of Judgment*.

For those who wish to explore the realms further, the free downloadable supplement *Deathly Turns* provides additional encounters for the PCs to undertake within the underworld, as well as a lingering problem for them to deal with after their return to Ningen-dō.

DEAD OR ALIVE?

Some Rokugani legends suggest there may be ways for the living to visit Meido, by stepping through an overlap between the realms, or leaving the body behind and sending the consciousness to explore beyond Ningen-dō. Even if either method is possible, it is rare. If a mortal does stumble into Meido, the mazoku guards quickly see them out. The only sure way to enter the Realm of Waiting is by dying. Therefore, this adventure is written for dead PCs.

THE ADVENTURE

Wheel of Judgment does not require the players to have any prior knowledge of the inner workings of Rokugan's underworld. While it is recommended that the GM read the adventure in its entirety before play, the less the players know, the better. While the PCs likely know the realms exist, they are unlikely to remember experiencing anything like this adventure before. The realms should feel strange and unfamiliar, no matter how much a PC might have theorized about them in life.

A NOTE ON REALITY AND FICTION

The underworld as presented here is fictional. However, as always, GM and players must remain sensitive to the fact that the names and concepts of the realms and Fortunes in *Legend of the Five Rings* originate in real-world religions. When the text describes a realm or Fortune, it refers exclusively to the realm or Fortune within *L5R*.

In Part One, the PCs find themselves in a strange landscape. They soon come to the realization that they have died and are now awaiting judgment in Meido, the Realm of Waiting. *Mazoku* ask them to join a queue of souls, which includes the shades of other humans, as well as animals and other creatures. When the PCs' turn finally comes, they are informed that their papers are missing. Faced with waiting an eternity, the PCs might attempt to find these papers themselves, or take the matter up with a higher-ranking mazoku. Either option requires them to explore Meido while avoiding the mazoku guards who patrol it. Eventually, a mazoku offers them a deal: gather information in Jigoku, and earn a return to the Mortal Realm, memories intact. Some mazoku have fallen under the influence of an *oni* and are deliberately causing problems in Meido. He needs to know who is involved.

Part Two has the PCs reincarnated in Jigoku, the Realm of Evil, as oni. The PCs must explore the realm to discover the demon behind the sabotage, and who its allies are. The PCs' journey takes them to the fortress of Fu Leng, but they must also visit an oni who bears the cipher, and talk their way past the lost Tenth Kami, Ryoshun, before they can return to the mazoku with any usable information.

Part Three encompasses the PCs' return to Meido through Gaki-dō, giving them a glimpse of the horrors there. Returning to the Realm of Waiting as unwelcome oni, the PCs finally reveal the corrupt mazoku, but this draws the attention of the oni behind it all, which manifests in Meido for the final battle.

Once the oni is defeated, the PCs are taken before Emma-Ō to be rewarded and returned to Ningen-dō. How they have performed during the course of the adventure determines the details of their return.

The Phantasmal Oni

The Phantasm is a demon of illusion, charged by Fu Leng himself (or so it claims) to sabotage the smooth running of Meido and steal worthy souls for Jigoku's growing demonic army. Unlike most demons, it is intangible. This helps it to work its illusory tricks and spread corruption. Whether the PCs learn about the Phantasm or not, revealing its agents compels it to manifest for the final battle in Part Three. Manifesting allows it to deal direct damage, but also makes it vulnerable, so it can finally be destroyed. (See page 28 for the Phantasmal Oni's profile.)

The GM should feel free to keep past actions of the PCs in mind, particularly memorable acts from past adventures that might have been extremely benevolent or otherwise. The PCs' past actions have been documented in Meido, and any infamous events from their lives could even be known among the mazoku. Friendly mazoku can explain, however, that they can't vouch for the PCs before Emma-Ō now that those documents are missing—hearsay is not permissible evidence in the court of the Fortune of Death.

THE UNDERWORLD

In the setting of the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*, the realms are different parts of a complicated world, and as their relative positions are not physically "fixed," they sometimes overlap. The realms explored in this adventure exist "below" the Mortal Realm, and they are not entirely separate from one another. Meido in particular works as a crossroads, sending souls into realms above and below, while the innumerable levels of Jigoku stretch deep beneath them all.

The Structure of Power

The whole of the underworld lies under the jurisdiction of Emma-Ō, the Fortune of Death, but his influence is not uniform throughout the realms. While the denizens of Jigoku are largely contained in their realm, the mazoku cannot safely enter Jigoku. The oni there are left to struggle amongst themselves, fighting for dominance over one another. Fu Leng's authority remains strong in Jigoku, though the Kami himself was defeated on the Day of Thunder. Different oni interpret his will in different ways, and the result is lawless chaos.

The numerous, unruly *gaki* in Gaki-dō, the Realm of Hungry Dead, are difficult to control and contain, but mazoku do stand guard over their borders as best they can. The realm is a desolate place, and gaki often attempt to escape into other realms, sometimes successfully.

At his palace in Meido, Emma-Ō judges the dead. Meido is firmly under his control, though the mazoku who administer the realm on his behalf are vastly outnumbered by the waiting souls—and just as fallible as any mortal bureaucrat of Otosan Uchi. Mistakes and even malfeasance are not unheard-of in Meido but, as the PCs learn, they have recently increased.

The hierarchy in Meido is as rigid as that of Rokugan, with Emma-Ō at the top, then the Kings of Hell, then various levels of mazoku. Mazoku consider their hierarchy very important, so showing appropriate deference to particular mazoku earns the PCs favor from important characters.

The hierarchy of mazoku is complex and labyrinthine, but includes three broad tiers. At the top, the *daimaō* serve as lieutenants to the nine Kings of Hell. They are trusted with the highest levels of administration in the underworld, and command mazoku in battle when necessary—though such a thing was unheard of prior to the fall of Fu Leng. *Maō* (demon lords) are put in charge of groups of mazoku, such as patrols or administrative areas. Under these are mazoku with specific roles, such as guards and scribes.

MAZOKU

Mazoku are demons trying to earn their redemption. Unlike the oni of Jigoku, the mazoku strive to overcome their vices and serve Emma-Ō, fulfilling myriad roles in the underworld. Serving as everything from jailers to scribes, mazoku work toward a better reincarnation.

In Meido, the mazoku seem more alive than the spirits of humans who pass through. While the shades lose any desire to eat, sleep, or do anything else, the mazoku do not. Meido is their home, where they live and work.

Most mazoku are red or blue, but other colors are possible and make no difference to the personality or abilities of these demons. Some have sharp horns they can use as weapons, while the horns of others curl inward and are merely decorative. Virtually all mazoku have claws sharp enough to inflict injury.

GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM

During the first part of the adventure, the PCs are shades—souls of the dead awaiting their judgment and reincarnation. In this state, most rules apply normally, with a few additional considerations.

While in Meido, shades behave much like flesh-and-blood living beings. This would be different for a shade that escaped Meido and returned to haunt Ningen-dō, but for the purposes of this adventure, a shade is hampered by the floors and walls of Meido just as if they were alive. Likewise, shades interact with each other normally.

Shades cannot gain the Bleeding, Dying, Exhausted, or Unconscious conditions, and cannot die.

PC shades gain any adversities appropriate for their cause of death, and these may hinder them in the afterlife (as well as their existing disadvantages). Any adversities gained as the result of physical harm in the afterlife or as a result of the PC's death are removed when a PC is reincarnated as an oni or returns to the realm of the living at the adventure's conclusion.

The following new adversity may be gained as a result of a PC's death or a critical strike suffered in Meido:

Lost Head (Air)

Types: Physical, Scar, Spiritual
Effects: The following apply to a character with the Lost Head adversity:

- Your head has been severed from your neck. Your head remains the center of your sensory perceptions and mental apparatus and is considered "you" for most game effects. You can control your body as long as you remain at range 0–2 of it; beyond this range, your body initiates no actions on its own, but responds reflexively in an appropriate way for your character. For example, the body of a *bushi* may react violently if surprised, while a courtier's body might attempt to flee.
- When you make a check for which the careful coordination of your head and body is important (such as a Fitness [Air] check to move through a crowd without bumping into people or a Courtesy [Air] check to convince someone you are responsible enough to trust with a delicate situation), you must choose and reroll two dice containing ◌ or ⟳. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

FURTHER REALMS

Wheel of Judgment provides the necessary information about the underworld to play through the adventure, but this book does not attempt to thoroughly describe these realms. To truly do so is beyond the abilities of mere mortals, but much more information is available in *Celestial Realms*, the sourcebook for the Spirit Realms of *Legend of the Five Rings*.

THE GREATEST REWARD

The chance to return to Ningen-dō with memories intact is a unique opportunity, more than even the greatest samurai might hope for. PCs may have heard legends of great heroes returning to Ningen-dō to complete their tasks, or they might hear such stories from their fellow shades or even mazoku jailers. If there happens to be something the PCs are keen to get back to quickly, this can be used to motivate them further, and there are instances in the game where the GM could remind the PCs of the passing of time in Ningen-dō.

For PCs who desire more rewards, interesting and powerful items might be found in these realms. While the PCs might find, win, or receive items here, the tricky thing is taking them back to Ningen-dō. The possibility of retaining items is something to discuss at the conclusion of the adventure, where the PCs might negotiate for such a favor, depending on how they performed.

Part One: Meido, the Realm of Waiting

In the first part of the adventure, the PCs awaken in Meido, the Realm of Waiting. After getting their bearings and coming to grips with their recent demise, the PCs learn that they face an interminable wait in queue. Whether they patiently wait or find a shortcut to the first gate, the PCs learn that the records of their life are missing, and they cannot be judged until these are found.

It is up to the PCs to find out what happened to their paperwork, and in their search, they may uncover evidence of sabotage and corrupt practices within the bureaucracy of Meido. Whether escorted by guards or in the course of their exploration, the PCs ultimately come to the office of a maō named Burakakin, who offers them a deal.

THE LANDSCAPE OF MEIDO

Much of Meido is flat and featureless, but crowded. Birds, beasts, humans, and other creatures approach the central palace from every direction and join the nearest of the eight queues leading through great gateways of shining, polished jade. Once past these first gates, the queuing continues until souls pass through a final gate and approach the palace itself.

The many-tiered palace of Emma-Ō is visible from everywhere in Meido. Far grander than any palace in the Mortal Realm, it is surrounded by eight citadels, which are in turn surrounded by the many buildings where the mazoku live and work. Seen from above, the complex resembles an enormous wheel, with the palace at the center, and the avenues where the souls line up as spokes.

Lining both sides of the avenues are offices and scriptoriums where the mazoku work incessantly, processing the vast quantities of paperwork the administration of Meido entails. Though the shades of the dead need not eat, drink, or sleep in Meido, the mazoku do, so many of the basic necessities that might be found in any mortal city exist here. Few spirits see much of Meido, merely passing slowly along a long avenue until they reach their judgment, unaware of the mazoku's work.

ARRIVAL

The adventure begins with the PCs' arrival in Meido. After the PCs have died during another adventure, or at the beginning of the game session, read or paraphrase the following:

> A vast plain stretches away on all sides, one great field of whispering grasses, dotted with distant figures. People, horses, wolves, and even what appear to be goblins, all walk toward the horizon, where the towers of a palace rise into the white sky. You feel a compulsion to join them.

The PCs might examine themselves, and if they died in battle, their body bears the wound that killed them, but there is no pain. They are dressed and equipped as they were in life. Though the terrain is unfamiliar, it feels as real as Ningen-dō once did. Their stats are the same as they were at the time of death.

Whether the PCs follow the crowd, set off in a different direction, or attempt to speak to one of the other spirits, the mazoku guard Minroki intercedes. He appears right next to them and directs them toward the end of a queue of souls that stretches away towards the horizon and the Palace of Emma-Ō.

The Guard

The first mazoku the PCs meet is Minroki, a guard tasked with herding newly arrived spirits into a queue. If the PCs are at all unsure about where they are, he informs them they are in the Realm of Waiting, and must queue to face their judgment. If the PCs show any resistance, it is Minroki's job to make them join the line. He is firm but fair, and always reports those who attempt to bribe him to his partner, Rikakima (see page 8).

Minroki, Mazoku Guard

Minroki is a muscular, red-skinned mazoku standing a head taller than the tallest Rokugani, even without his horns. He tries to perform his duties perfectly, but his explosive temper sometimes gets him into trouble. Minroki has been partnered with Rikakima as long as he can remember, and he trusts her judgment. He looks up to her and would be furious to learn she takes bribes. He has a great respect for bushi and loves to hear them recount their battles.

To represent Minroki, use the **Mazoku Guard** profile below.

Mazoku Guard

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 4 2

Mazoku guards ensure a peaceful procession of souls to be judged and deal with any unruly dead. A mazoku guard who does their duty loyally and consistently can hope for a rebirth as an animal or perhaps even a human.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
35 HONOR		ENDURANCE	14
25 GLORY		COMPOSURE	10
20 STATUS		FOCUS	5
+2, –2		VIGILANCE	3
DEMEANOR · GRUFF			

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Vigilant: Social; *Interpersonal*	**Hot-Tempered:** Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Yari: Range 2, Damage 5, Deadliness 3, Wargear

Claws: Range 0, Damage 3, Deadliness 3

Gear (equipped): Mazoku robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 1), jitte, small bag of Meido dust

ABILITIES

Roamer of Realms: A mazoku is an Otherworldly being. Once per round as a Movement action, a mazoku can move to any other position in their current realm instantaneously. When they do, they may choose any number of captives or companions at range 0–1 to move with them.

Herder of Spirits: A mazoku can clearly perceive and interact with spirits and shades normally, regardless of their tangibility. When a spirit or shade attempts to hide from a mazoku, increase the TN of their check by 1.

THE QUEUE

Once the PCs join a queue, they have the chance to speak to other spirits. Some seem distant and uninterested: they have been in Meido long enough to gain the Deadened condition (see page 6). This condition is caused by something in the supernatural atmosphere, which the mazoku also collect as dust to deliberately confound characters like the Forest Troll and keep them—literally—in line.

The queue rarely moves, and the PCs may feel like they are waiting forever. Mazoku guards are ever-present, but they keep their distance unless they detect trouble. If the PCs ask Minroki as he passes on patrol how long they are likely to wait, he merely shrugs and implies it could be measured in mortal lifetimes.

Read or paraphrase the following:

> The queue stretches away ahead of you, as far as you can see. Samurai, peasants, and even the huge form of a troll stand in an orderly line, gazing silently ahead. They're not moving. How long have they been standing there? Birds perch silently on the shoulders of some. Before you reach the end of the queue, a man in the clothes of a traveling merchant comes from further ahead and takes his place behind a fidgeting courtier.

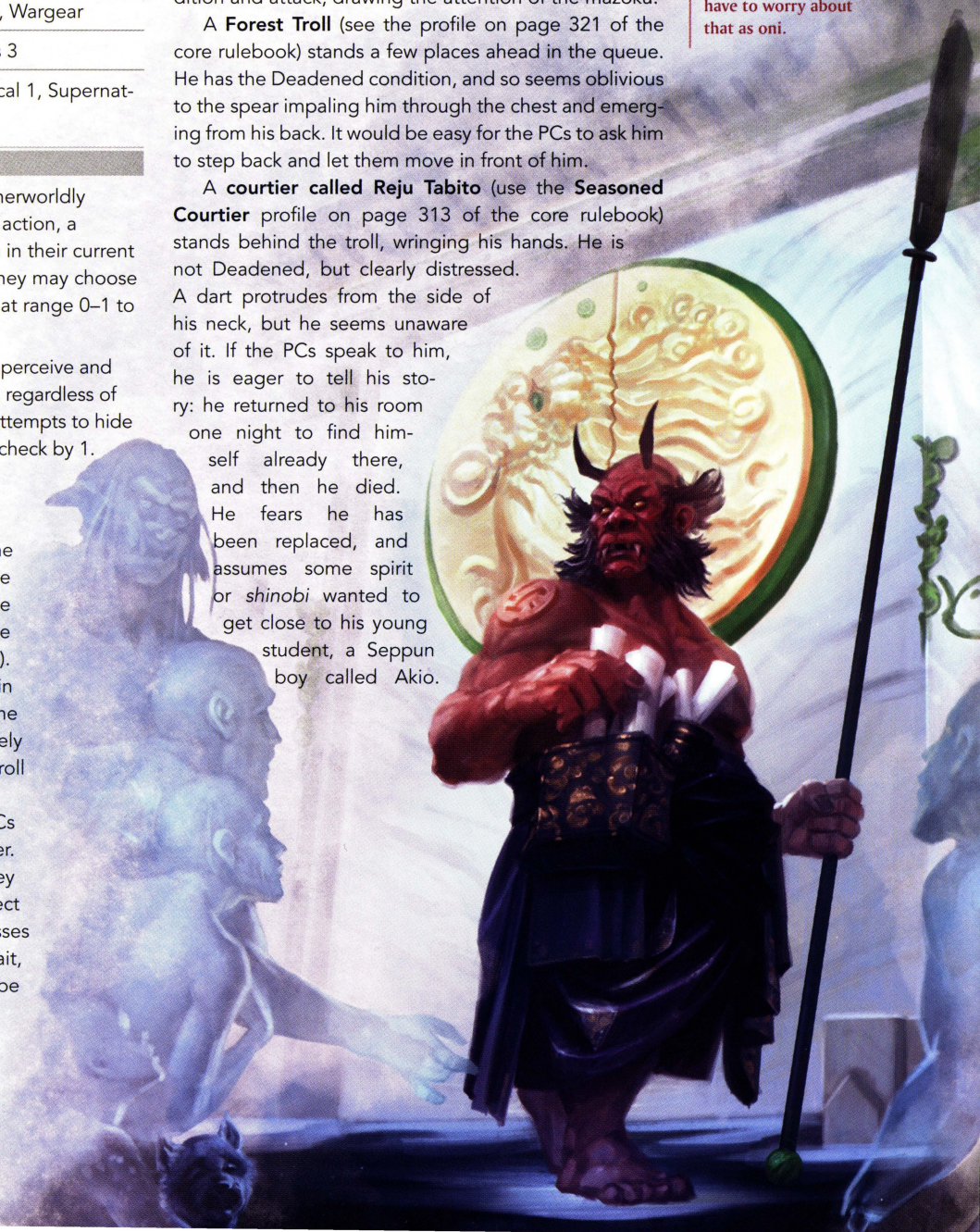
Some characters with whom the PCs may interact are described here, but the GM should feel free to add to or replace these with NPCs that the PCs might have dispatched in recent adventures. If the PCs move into view of an old enemy, that NPC may lose the Deadened condition and attack, drawing the attention of the mazoku.

A **Forest Troll** (see the profile on page 321 of the core rulebook) stands a few places ahead in the queue. He has the Deadened condition, and so seems oblivious to the spear impaling him through the chest and emerging from his back. It would be easy for the PCs to ask him to step back and let them move in front of him.

A **courtier called Reju Tabito** (use the **Seasoned Courtier** profile on page 313 of the core rulebook) stands behind the troll, wringing his hands. He is not Deadened, but clearly distressed. A dart protrudes from the side of his neck, but he seems unaware of it. If the PCs speak to him, he is eager to tell his story: he returned to his room one night to find himself already there, and then he died. He fears he has been replaced, and assumes some spirit or *shinobi* wanted to get close to his young student, a Seppun boy called Akio.

YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

Anything the PCs were wearing or carrying at the time of their death, they have with them in Meido (really, a ghostly echo of the item). However, when the PCs are reincarnated as oni in Jigoku, they must leave everything behind. They keep anything they accumulate in the Realm of Evil, but if they die, those items are lost. Items found in Jigoku are often Unholy, though the PCs don't have to worry about that as oni.



There is nothing the PCs can do to reassure him now, but if they later learn there's a chance to return to Ningen-dō, Tabito would do anything for a promise to destroy his doppelgänger and save Akio. Tabito and Akio dwelled in Otosan Uchi (or any location the GM chooses as appropriate for their campaign).

A **merchant called Hirosi** joins the queue in front of the PCs, after approaching from further ahead in the line. He has been trying to keep near the back of the queue, afraid of the judgment awaiting him. He asks to switch places, but only when the mazoku guard isn't watching. Skipping the queue in either direction is forbidden. When Hirosi turns his back on the PCs, the cause of his death becomes clear—a dagger protruding from a bloody wound between his shoulder blades.

A **Fortunist monk called Himari** joins the queue behind the PCs. She is calm and confident. She died in the Plains Wind Monastery as an old woman, surrounded by friends. She is not Deadened, but content. She is newly arrived but knows much about Meido. If questioned, she reveals that the number of spirits arriving in Meido is almost too much for the mazoku to handle, and she fears that some mazoku might take advantage of the crowds, offering preferential treatment to those who bring gifts. Should the PCs inquire about gifts that might interest mazoku, Himari produces a bag of seeds from her pocket. She explains that she did not mean to bring them, but here they are. If the PCs want something to give the mazoku, they might persuade her to let them have them with a **TN 2 Courtesy check (Void 1, Fire 3)**, as she is in no hurry herself.

Later, an **aristocrat called Otomo Ichika** moves up behind the PCs, swapping places with the monk. Her blue-black lips and visibly swollen veins reveal that her life ended with poisoning. She commands the PCs to let her pass. She was wealthy and powerful in life and died in jewels, which she intends to give to the mazoku to ensure she is reborn into the same powerful family. If the PCs refuse, she watches them carefully, and informs the guard if they step out of line.

Ryōtaro, the rebellious rōnin (see page 11), joins the queue a few places behind the PCs, ready to cause trouble later. His armor is cut and gouged, he bears several bloody wounds, and his throat is cut down to the bone. He is upset because he reached the front of the queue once, but his papers were missing. He caused a scene and was sent to the back of the line, but he doesn't know if his papers might be there when he reaches the gate again.

Not far ahead in the queue stands a supernatural creature known as a **ki-rin** (see page 322 of the core rulebook). Larger and faster than a horse, it can bear several riders at once. The PCs could reach the first gate almost instantly on the horned steed, if they are worthy of the ride. Even the mazoku treat this majestic being with awe, and do not attempt to stop it from moving ahead in line. If the ki-rin takes the PCs to the gate, the mazoku guards treat the ki-rin with great respect and usher it straight through, leaving the PCs behind to talk to **Rikakima** (see page 8).

NEW CONDITION: DEADENED

Description: The character is in a dreamlike state, in which both duty and desire become a distant memory. They lack motivation, are open to suggestion, and both move and speak slowly. An affected character may snap back to alertness if injured or if their memory is powerfully and emotively stimulated.

Effects: A Deadened character increases the TN of all action checks they make by 2 and cannot defend against damage.

Removed When: If the character suffers a critical strike or unmasks, they remove the Deadened condition at the end of their turn.

Travel

The scale of Meido is too vast for mortals to comprehend, and only seems to shrink when a mazoku uses their ability to move a spirit at speed from one place to the next. However, the PCs might find a creature in the queue with the ability to carry them at greater speeds, such as the ki-rin. Ordinary mounts, such as the horse on page 326 of the core rulebook, may also be available, but are almost certain to draw the attention of the mazoku guards.

Beating the Queue

Having learned that they are doomed to wait a supernaturally long time, the PCs may try to work their way up the queue or find another way to beat it. The mazoku expect all deceased to patiently wait in the queue at the point where they joined it. Moving ahead or backward in the queue is strictly forbidden—although with the number of souls waiting judgment, the overworked mazoku cannot maintain a flawless watch. If a mazoku catches a spirit breaking the rules—or suspects that a spirit is not in the same spot they were before—they may order the offender to the back of the queue, drag them off to spend a few centuries in the **Holding Cells** (see page 11), or perhaps just give them a stern warning for a first offense.

The following are just some possible ways the PCs might break the rules to expedite their stay in Meido:

- If the PCs try to bribe Minroki, he becomes angry at their presumption. He marches them up the queue to the first gate and tells his partner Rikakima of their crime, leaving them with her. She either sends them to the Holding Cells or takes the bribe herself to check their papers now. This requires a **TN 3 Courtesy check (Void 1, Earth 4, Fire 4)**.
- If the PCs persuade the nearest shades to let them pass, they find those ahead are Deadened and easy to manipulate. They could move up the queue this way, as long as Minroki does not notice. To reach the first gate, the PCs must travel for many hours, avoiding mazoku guards all along the way. If and when they do at last reach the gate, Rikakima suggests a bribe to overlook their behavior.
- The PCs may sneak away with a **TN 3 Skulduggery check (Air 2, Fire 4)**, but escaping Meido is nearly impossible. The realm is vast, with no clear roads leading to its borders. (See **Exploring Meido**, on page 8.)

Reaching the First Gate

When the PCs first see the gate, read or paraphrase the following:

> The vast, jade gate stands open in a smooth wall of polished marble that stretches away in both directions. Beyond the gate, the queue continues through a wide street, lined with tall buildings, homes, and offices, interspersed with fountains and gardens.
>
> Beneath the gate, a blue mazoku in white robes kneels at a desk, surrounded by piles of paper. Two mazoku guards stand nearby, watching for trouble.

Rikakima kneels at a desk under the colossal gate, ticking names off a list. When the PCs reach her, either by moving to the front of the queue or being brought by the guard, she asks their names. She has huge piles of papers, but she cannot find the PCs' records. She tells the PCs their papers are not there, but she does not apologize. They have to wait, indefinitely, as she is too busy to go searching for them. They can't get through the second gate without papers.

If the PCs offer their help, or ask if there is another solution, or offer a bribe, they may be able to persuade Rikakima to help them. Otherwise, they face being sent to the back of the queue. Convincing Rikakima is a **complicated task with a difficulty value of 4** (see page 253 of the core rulebook). The PCs gain one momentum point per successful Social skill check, plus one point per bonus success on the check. If they succeed, Rikakima sighs and sends them through the gate to Office 801 to ask the mazoku there if he has come across their papers. If the PCs do not achieve the required 4 momentum points within three rounds, or if they offend Rikakima before reaching their goal, Rikakima's patience runs out and she dismisses the PCs to the back of the line, with Minroki escorting them if they prove obstinate.

Rikakima is defensive if anyone suggests she might have made a mistake or lost the papers herself and accuses the PCs of deliberately hiding them to avoid facing some crime. If the PCs argue with her or are at all rude or aggressive, she sends them to the back of the queue. Then, like Ryōtaro, they can either wait and hope their papers have been found by the time they reach the gate again or try once more to beat the queue.

Like many of the mazoku the PCs encounter in the vicinity of their line, Rikakima serves under the maō Burakakin. Also like the others, she is not eager to invoke her superior or refer troublesome shades to him. Unless the PCs come up with an extremely clever plan and succeed wildly with it, they should spend some more time exploring Meido before meeting Burakakin.

SHUGENJA IN THE UNDERWORLD

Meido is made of the same, natural stuff as Ningen-dō, so shugenja PCs may still invoke the kami while in Meido. However, in Jigoku there are no kami, only *kansen*—nature spirits corrupted by Fu Leng's Taint. Therefore, invocations are not normally possible in Jigoku, but *mahō* is. In addition, should a shugenja retain their demonic form in Part Three when the PCs return to Meido, the kami there refuse to answer them. Kami can be found in Gaki-dō, but they are very few and far between. To represent this, you might increase the TN of invocation checks made in Gaki-dō by 1.

Despite these challenges, shugenja have unique expertise that suits them well to navigating the challenges of the underworld. Thanks to their experience in treating with spirits, shugenja may use Theology as a Social skill when interacting with demons and other spirit beings of the underworld. In addition, the GM should consider reducing the TN of other checks for which a shugenja's experience is particularly suited.

TIME IN THE UNDERWORLD

Time in the underworld passes very differently from in Ningen-dō. From the PCs' perspective, this may only become apparent once they return to the Mortal Realm, where they might discover that much less or much more time has passed than they experienced. However, the PCs might also experience some temporal distortion during their time in the underworld, with journeys of great distances seeming to pass quite quickly, or a short period of waiting seeming to stretch into eternity. As GM, you can make as much or as little use of this device as you feel best to control the pacing of the adventure, create atmosphere, and reinforce important themes.

RIKAKIMA, MAZOKU MAGISTRATE

A blue-skinned mazoku with horns that curl downward, her expression is invariably glum. She wears the simple robes of the mazoku magistrates and carries the tools necessary to record any indiscretions. Her partner is currently Minroki, but her previous partner earned reincarnation as a human centuries ago for dealing with a sudden influx of gaki. She still resents that he was so well rewarded. She considers that because she is clever enough to take bribes without getting caught, she deserves them, and like many mazoku considers any food or drink smuggled from the Mortal Realm a delicacy.

To represent Rikakima, use the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile below.

A NOTE ON DIET

The mazoku in Meido live on a strictly vegetarian diet. They cannot be seen as a threat to any animal or insect soul that passes through Meido. Because they are demons earning forgiveness for crimes committed in past lives, their diet is also deliberately bland. A gruel made with supernaturally flavorless millet, grown in the vast plains, is their only sustenance—if they obey the rules.

MAZOKU BUREAUCRAT

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 2 — 4

Mazoku bureaucrats are responsible for the various procedures that allow souls to progress through Meido, receive their judgment, and reincarnate. Regardless of their specific duties, these mazoku deal with a range of processes and documents

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
30	HONOR	ENDURANCE	10
25	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
30	STATUS	FOCUS	5
+1, +1, –2	DEMEANOR - DETACHED	VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 1 | MARTIAL 0 | SCHOLAR 3 | SOCIAL 2 | TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES

Precise Memory: Scholar; *Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Covetous: Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Claws: Range 0, Damage 3, Deadliness 3

Gear (equipped): Mazoku robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 1), bundle of scrolls, calligraphy set

ABILITIES

Roamer of Realms: A mazoku is an Otherworldly being. Once per round as a Movement action, a mazoku can move to any other position in their current realm instantaneously. When they do, they may choose any number of captives or companions at range 0–1 to move with them.

Herder of Spirits: A mazoku can clearly perceive and interact with spirits and shades normally, regardless of their tangibility. When a spirit or shade attempts to hide from a mazoku, increase the TN of their check by 1.

EXPLORING MEIDO

Though most spirits that pass through Meido never explore, there are several locations the PCs might visit once through the first gate. While the queues of spirits are long and the plains crowded, there seems to be no shortage of space inside the citadels, where what appears like a small building from the outside is often supernaturally large on the inside. Generally, the architecture of the buildings resembles that of Rokugan, yet certain elements—and a feeling that cannot be directly attributed to anything—are strange and unfamiliar.

Meido Dust

The atmosphere of Meido gradually inflicts the Deadened condition on most shades. The shimmering dust of Meido bears this same quality in a more concentrated form, so mazoku use the dust when a new shade is unruly. The PCs might acquire and use the dust, but it only works on the shades of people and creatures that have died, not on oni. If a mazoku uses dust on the PCs, they can resist its effects with a **TN 3 Meditation check**.

If the PCs stay in Meido very long, the GM should have them make a **TN 1 Meditation check** to see if they succumb to the atmosphere. This can be repeated each game day or session if the PCs remain in Meido as shades, increasing the TN by 1 each time.

OFFICE 801

A mazoku magistrate sits in here, organizing papers and sending them on to the appropriate offices. If the PCs inquire about their own papers, he scowls and says he can't be expected to remember the name of every soul whose life passes through his hands. He has enough work to do without chasing their papers.

If the PCs bribe him or succeed on a **TN 3 Social skill check (Void 1, Earth 4, Fire 4)** using an appropriate skill, he admits to remembering at least one of their names and claims he sent their papers on to Rikakima. If any of the PCs has a glory of 50 or higher, decrease the TN of the check by 1 (to a minimum of 1). The bureaucrat surmises that if Rikakima doesn't have them at the gate, perhaps she left them in her office, or maybe sent them to the repository by mistake. Perhaps the scribe tasked with delivering the papers, who works in Scriptorium 241, took them to the wrong office. In any case, the magistrate says that finding their papers might be near impossible, but it's certainly not his fault.

Rikakima's Office

Rikakima has a sparse office, containing a desk with papers on top. These do not include the PCs' missing paperwork, just scroll after scroll listing the many petty transgressions of other mazoku.

There is a hidden compartment in the desk, and a **TN 2 Government** or **TN 1 Skulduggery check** allows the PCs to find this. Inside are Rokugani sweets. The PCs might use this information to blackmail Rikakima into helping them, since possession of such contraband is damning. Or, they might take this valuable item to bribe other mazoku.

There are several official papers here awaiting review by the maō Burakakin (see page 12).

Scriptorium 241

One of the many scriptoriums in Meido, it's a square room with scrolls hanging on every wall, each bearing beautiful calligraphy. On closer inspection, these scrolls say:

> The finest brush can paint the ugliest words.
>
> If the realms endured perpetual balance, there would be no movement.
>
> No task that has a beginning is ever truly endless.
>
> If you're reading this, you should be working.

The four mazoku in here are busy, but one offers to help if the PCs do them a favor, taking a scroll to Office 822 and bringing back a reply. No mazoku wants to be accused of making a mistake, but a successful **TN 2 Social check** might compel the mazoku who had their papers to admit her involvement. She is almost certain she didn't mistakenly take the papers to the repository.

The mazoku of the scriptorium serve the maō Burakakin. Although they have no desire to trouble their superior by referring cases to him, the PCs may learn his name by questioning the scribes or investigating documents in the scriptorium.

The Repository of Documents from Ningen-dō

Each citadel contains a repository of documents cataloging the behavior of souls in a particular realm, and the PCs might come here searching for their papers. The repository is a narrow room with shelves on either side overflowing with scrolls. These shelves stretch away into the distance. The scrolls further back are covered in increasingly thick layers of shimmering Meido dust.

The repository is unguarded, but mazoku appear regularly, adding piles of scrolls to the already laden shelves. Once a spirit comes from the Mortal Realm to Meido and moves on, relevant papers are stored here. The scrolls might once have been ordered, as the further the PCs walk into the room the older the scrolls become. However, many have been misplaced and those near the door are particularly jumbled, as though the mazoku no longer have time to file them properly. The back of the room is too distant to be visible, if it exists at all. Every sound made in the room seems muffled, absorbed by the sheer quantity of paper.

The histories of countless souls can be found somewhere in this room, and the GM can use this opportunity to tempt the PCs with future adventures, as they fortuitously come across interesting scrolls. PCs might make a **TN 3 Theology (Void) check** to find the history of a scroll relevant to themselves, detailing the life of an ancestor or enemy who lived in the last three generations. Though the PCs don't yet know they have the chance to return to Ningen-dō, they may spend ✿ to find scrolls that might be valuable to others.

The PCs' presence is challenged by a patrolling mazoku guard when they leave and, if the PCs have

ON THE RUN?

It may seem odd that the PCs can explore Meido at their own pace, but the situation is complex. Souls are not prisoners, strictly speaking, but neither is queuing for judgment voluntary. Should a few shades slip out of line and wander around Meido, the overworked (or simply bored) bureaucrats they run into aren't necessarily concerned—it's not their job to keep the souls in line, after all. Even guards may show some leniency as long as the PCs aren't actively breaking rules by cutting ahead of others in line. However, the law of the cosmos requires all souls to ultimately face their judgment, and the guards deal harshly with souls they suspect of trying to escape their fate.

Ultimately, as GM, you decide how much heat the PCs face. If you want to up the tension in this part of the adventure, you could have the PCs face constant pursuit by mazoku guards. As fugitives, the PCs might have to evade or hide from guards, while mazoku bureaucrats treat the PCs with suspicion and cry out for help at the first opportunity. At the other end of the spectrum, the mazoku might see little issue with the PCs roaming about for a few decades or centuries, so long as they eventually take their place in line.

YOU ARE HERE

Meido is vast, and the locations described here are only a sample taken from the PCs' near vicinity. The queue in which the PCs begin the adventure is under the jurisdiction of Gokan, one of the nine Kings of Hell. All the mazoku the PCs encounter are subordinates of Gokan, while the King of Hell himself is answerable only to Emma-Ō. Characters who wander far afield encounter similar administrative offices, but might find unexpected wonders as well.

ETERNAL PATIENCE

If the PCs decide not to search for their papers, Ryōtaro the rōnin causes trouble by trying to push in front of them. Guards intervene and throw everyone in the holding cells (see page 11), regardless of the circumstances.

taken any scrolls, they must make a successful **TN 3 Skulduggery (Air) check** to avoid having the guard search for, discover, and confiscate them. If the PCs do not have any scrolls, or successfully conceal them, the guard apologizes. She explains that the repository is getting stranger and stranger visitors. She even saw the jail keeper, Atonoriki, in here earlier—but if he needed to deposit papers, why didn't he send subordinates as usual? This is a clue that the jailer is up to something, being one of the traitorous mazoku. His name is on the Phantasm's list of accomplices (see **The List** on page 27).

Jail Keeper's Office

NPC TEMPLATES

When this adventure directs you to apply an NPC template to a profile, you can find it on page 311 of the core rulebook.

The jail keeper, Atonoriki, has left in such a hurry that his door is open, papers in disarray over both desk and floor. The desk also bears a chop with red ink still fresh on the seal's image. If the PCs take a closer look, they find the image on the seal is of a cage. This is the office of the mazoku in charge of the Holding Cells, as the papers on his desk attest. The PCs might use the seal to authorize the release of one or more prisoners, but such a crime might be enough to damn them.

The jail keeper is a maō, and very protective of his position. He soon returns here, and if he catches the PCs snooping in his office, sends them straight to the Holding Cells. His caution is partly due to the fact that he is corrupt and periodically arranges to send prisoners to Jigoku without permission. The scrolls in his office show that the jail keeper has condemned prisoners to reincarnation in Jigoku, but without receiving the proper permission from Emma-Ō or one of the Kings of Hell. Atonoriki has been doing this at the direction of the Phantasmal Oni, though there is no proof of this conspiracy in the paperwork. Of course, Atonoriki takes every effort to prevent the PCs (or anyone else) from closely examining his files.

Atonoriki uses the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile on page 8 with the **Warrior** template.

Office 822

This office is not only completely empty, there is a fine layer of shimmering Meido dust on the floor—it seems no one has worked here for quite some time. A successful **TN 2 Theology check** reveals the nature of the dust, and the PCs may gather some for their own use (see **Meido Dust** on page 8).

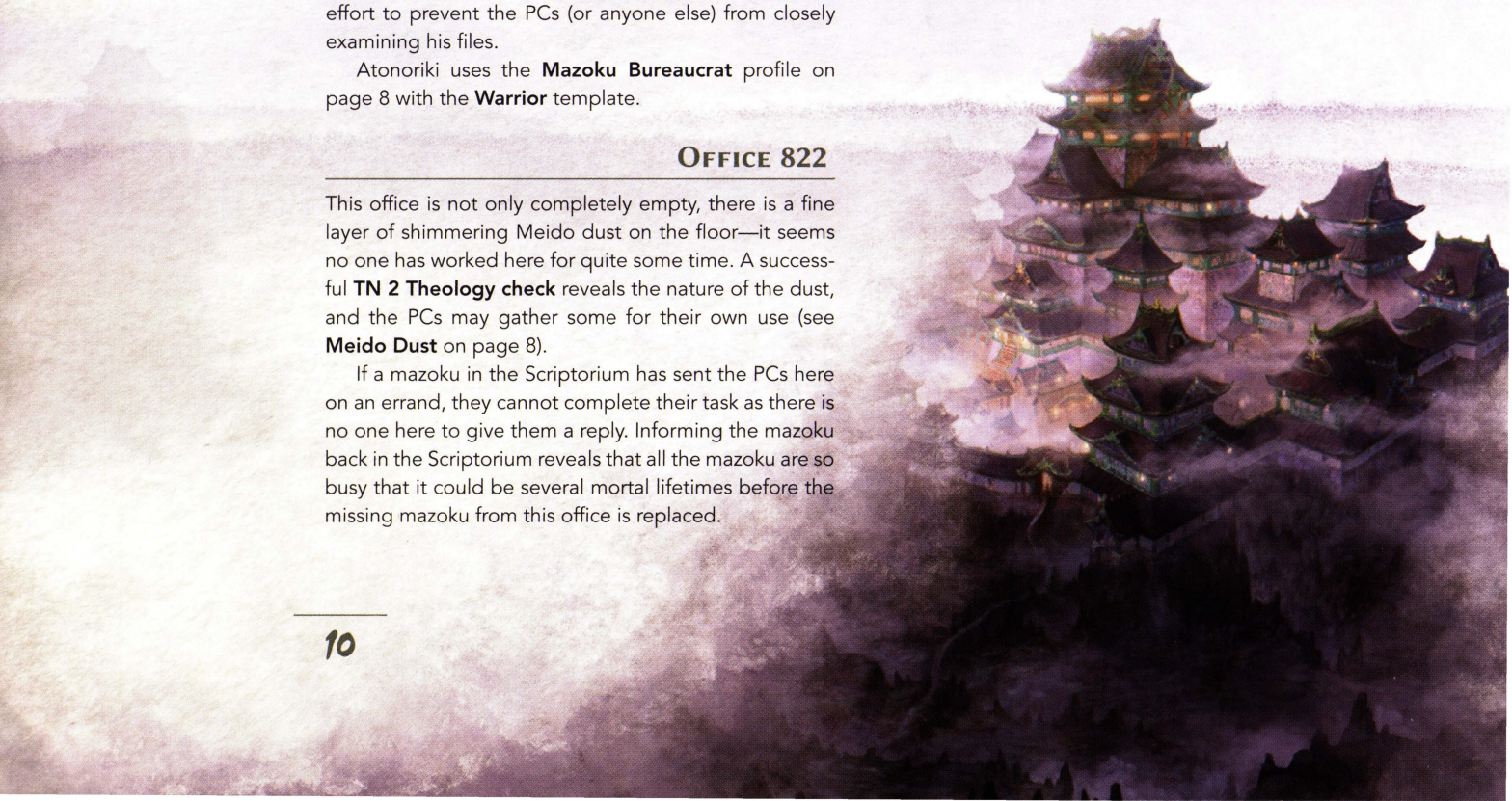
If a mazoku in the Scriptorium has sent the PCs here on an errand, they cannot complete their task as there is no one here to give them a reply. Informing the mazoku back in the Scriptorium reveals that all the mazoku are so busy that it could be several mortal lifetimes before the missing mazoku from this office is replaced.

The Barracks

The mazoku guards come here to sleep in cramped alcoves, and the huge hall has a long table down the center where they take their meals. Some of the guards pair up for patrols, but others, like Minroki, are partnered with administrative mazoku. This is a slightly superior position, as it means they are trusted enough to guard alone, also serving as bodyguards for their partners. The table is currently empty, but several alcoves are occupied. In the hall are several Mazoku weapons—both *yari* and *jitte*—on a stand.

The Palace of Emma-Ō

After queuing, spirits eventually reach the second gate and enter the palace of Emma-Ō (usually) one at a time. From the outside, this enormous structure appears to have many levels and many rooms, but when spirits enter, they find themselves in a large courtyard that seems open to the sky, with no visible doors that would lead them into the rest of the palace. This is the Court of Judgment, where mazoku magistrates stand in attendance, ready to speak for or against a soul. In the center of this room, the Throne of Judgment stands on a tiered platform. A mazoku judge, King of Hell, or even Emma-Ō himself might sit here. The throne, of polished glass, is always occupied. Any spirit who makes their way here by nefarious means is immediately arrested by the mazoku guards, and either sent to the back of the queue or to the **Holding Cells** (see page 11).



CAUSING TROUBLE

Whether the PCs get into trouble through their own actions, or the actions of another such as Ryōtaro (see page 6), they are taken to the Holding Cells. Even if the PCs avoid breaking any rules and behave perfectly, they are still (unfairly) dumped in the Holding Cells. This is because Burakakin (see page 12) is impressed by their initiative and wants to see if they can escape. It is a test to see if they are good enough to send to Jigoku on an important mission.

Two guards escort the PCs to the Holding Cells. These guards are ready to use force if necessary and, if the PCs cause trouble for them, use Meido dust to inflict the Deadened condition.

Holding Cells

Near the guards' barracks stands the round, stone building of the holding cells. It has an unusual, squat appearance, a single entryway, and no windows. Outside, a pair of guards stand to either side of the door. Inside, prisoners are placed in individual cages and lowered into a dark hole on a system of ropes and pulleys, as though being filed away for later. The cages come in many shapes and sizes to accommodate almost any spirit that might pass through. The atmosphere is dark and dusty, and many of the prisoners are Deadened. At the GM's discretion, this might be an appropriate place to test the PCs' resistance to Meido's atmosphere (see **Meido Dust** on page 8).

Whether or not the PCs have encountered him already, Ryōtaro is here in a nearby cage, muttering about the unfairness of it all. He tells the PCs that he is here for causing a disturbance in the queue and has been warned that worse crimes would have him sent to Jigoku. He plans to escape and invites the PCs to join him. (In truth, he has no strong plan and cannot escape without the PCs' help.) The bars on Ryōtaro's small cage are rusted and loose, and a character can make a **TN 3 Fitness check (Earth 2, Air 4)** to remove one and allow him to slip out.

The PCs have a better chance of escaping without him, though they could use him as a distraction and escape while he causes trouble. For a character with appropriate tools, picking the lock of the cage holding the PCs requires a **TN 3 Skulduggery check (Air 2, Fire 4)**. A successful **TN 2 Fitness check (Water 1, Earth 3)** allows a character to climb up the web of chains and cages to the top of the pit. Anyone who fails this check with a shortfall of 2 falls into the pit, which is bottomless. Then, there are the blue guards at the door to deal with. (See the **Mazoku Guard** profile on page 4.)

If Ryōtaro escapes with the PCs, he soon leaves them, saying they would only slow down his exploration of Meido. If the PCs fail the above check and fall endlessly, or fail to escape, the guards eventually retrieve them and march them to Burakakin, who is unimpressed by their antics but offers them a chance to prove themselves (see **Deal with a Demon**, below).

Freedom

If the PCs have not already visited some of the locations in Meido, they can do so before the guards catch up with them. If they have already explored Meido, guards are waiting to catch them as they leave the building:

> Mazoku guards surround you with weapons raised. It seems the guards have had enough trouble. But, rather than attack, the guards part to allow a well-dressed bureaucrat to step through. She addresses you, "Your resourcefulness has come to the attention of my master, who invites you to discuss a certain opportunity I believe you will find most interesting."

If the PCs accept, the guards escort them to Burakakin's office. If they are hesitant, the envoy assures them she offers a possible solution to their predicament. If the PCs insist on fighting the mazoku guards, the encounter rank should be at least double the PCs' group rank. The guards drag any defeated PCs before Burakakin anyway.

RYŌTARO, REBELLIOUS RŌNIN

Ryōtaro does not intend to meekly accept his judgment. He would certainly have been Deadened, but Burakakin is waiting to see whether he is a likely candidate for the same job he's considering for the PCs. Ryōtaro's reckless attitude and poor planning stand against him, however, and unless the GM considers the group of players small enough that they need a companion in Meido, Ryōtaro is not sent to Jigoku. If required, Ryōtaro can be represented by the **Skillful Rōnin** profile on page 316 of the core rulebook.

BURAKAKIN'S OFFICE

Unlike many mazoku offices, this one is highly decorated, with hanging scrolls, vases, and even an elaborate flower arrangement. The vases depict legendary creatures, while the flowers seem to be made of paper-thin metal. The desk here is unusually tidy, as Burakakin delegates much paperwork to other, less-important mazoku.

Deal with a Demon

When the PCs reach the office, read or paraphrase the following:

> The guards drag you across the threshold of a room and push you to your knees. It appears to be an office, with shelves laden with scrolls, books, and piles of papers, and a large desk in the center of the room. A mazoku looks up from his work at the desk, frowns, and continues writing.

If the PCs attempt to speak, the guards jab them with their weapons. The PCs must wait for Burakakin to finish his work. When he is ready, he looks up and tells them he is a very busy demon, and they have been causing trouble. Now, he must decide what to do with them.

Burakakin wants the PCs to fear him, and he accuses the PCs of causing trouble deliberately and destroying their own papers to avoid judgment for past crimes.

However, if the PCs suspect there is something amiss or that other papers are also missing, Burakakin does not deny the facts.

Burakakin is considering the PCs for a special task, but muses that they might not be up to it. In fact, Burakakin has already chosen the PCs for this task; what is at stake is how Burakakin views the PCs. Initially, he views them as simple—and probably criminal—tools of which he can make use. If the PCs want to earn Burakakin's respect, this may be resolved as a **complicated task with a difficulty value of 6** (see page 253 of the core rulebook). The PCs fail this task if any of them unmask in such a way as to confirm Burakakin's dim view of them, or if they do not accrue enough momentum points within 3 rounds.

The Job

If the PCs impress Burakakin, he tells them they're just the sort of spirits he's been waiting for, and he claims Emma-Ō has a special task for them. Many souls' records have gone missing in recent years, while others show inconsistencies that raise the possibility of tampering. Based on his investigation into the matter, Burakakin believes an outside force is responsible for this sabotage: an oni of Jigoku.

Burakakin explains that the PCs are to enter Jigoku to uncover the source of the disruption in Meido. It is a difficult task, but—he explains with a grin—few souls get an opportunity like this to improve their karma after death. In addition, he promises they can forgo waiting and receive their audience with Emma-Ō immediately after completing their mission. Assuming they accept the challenge, he tells them they cannot go looking as they are, but he has a way for them to blend in among Jigoku's denizens (see **Demonic Masks**, below).

If the PCs fail to impress the demon or argue their innocence, he still tells them they have one last chance to prove themselves before they are punished. They must go to Jigoku and learn who is sabotaging the operation of Meido. In this case, he gives them the same task, but is more guarded with his information. He does not allow them to choose their own masks or promise any reward—but if they fail to complete his task, he intends to leave them in Jigoku forever.

If the PCs ask for more information, Burakakin suggests they might start with the Fortress of Fu Leng; if there's any source of records in Jigoku, that's where they must be. They needn't worry about finding the fortress, since every oni is drawn there eventually. He can't give them any more information than that, since he hasn't been to Jigoku for a very long time and it's always changing.

Refusal

If the PCs refuse the task, Burakakin sends for a superior. Eventually Kironobiri, a daimaō, appears to assure the PCs that the task is a legitimate one. He congratulates them for being cautious even when offered something they desire. If the PCs continue to refuse, this angers Kironobiri, who calls them cowards. He tells Burakakin to send them to Jigoku by force if necessary. Then they can perform the task or remain in the Realm of Evil forever.

Burakakin, Maō

Burakakin is a lean, long-limbed maō with straight, sharp horns that shine like polished steel. He has a habit of tapping his claws together as he thinks and gesturing with them as he talks. He is ambitious and believes that if the PCs are successful on his behalf, he has a chance of being promoted to daimaō. He works hard and follows the rules but likes to witness fear and suffering in others.

To represent Burakakin, use the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile on page 8 with the **Socialite** template.

Kironobiri, Daimaō

Kironobiri was once ambitious, but through many lifetimes of service to Emma-Ō has achieved what he believes is a form of enlightenment. Considering himself above other mazoku, he expects to be granted resurrection as a human at any moment. He therefore takes great interest in the happenings of Ningen-dō and is sympathetic to the shades of humans who lived honorable lives.

To represent Kironobiri, use the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** on page 8 with the **Sage** template.

Demonic Masks

The maō opens a cabinet, revealing a collection of finely carved and brightly painted wooden masks. Some are beautiful, but most are strange and unnerving. If the PCs impressed Burakakin, he points at six in particular (described on page 13), recommending them to the PCs. If the PCs did not impress him, he simply hands them a mask each. The GM might decide which, or randomly assign one to each PC.

If the PCs are allowed to choose, they may ask about the masks, but the maō says it makes little difference which they choose. He is impatient for them to make up their minds so he can send them to Jigoku. If they want to see different masks from the cabinet, Burakakin tells the PCs that these are the only six that they could handle.

The PCs might assume they are donning a disguise, as Burakakin does not explain that they are to be reincarnated. He wants to see them surprised and scared, so encourages them to put the masks on all at the same time. If they ask how they are to return, he tells them

ONI AND STRIFE

The oni masks are powerful artifacts that date from before the fall of Fu Leng and the sundering of the underworld. These are no mere disguises; characters who don these strange items are truly reborn as demons in Jigoku. As such, their base desires and the worst parts of their nature are amplified. To represent this internal struggle, PCs in oni form increase the TN of all checks they make while Compromised by 1.

While in the form of oni, PCs should unmask in a way appropriate to their new situation, such as the following suggestions:

- **Breath of Evil:** the PC devours another oni or an Unholy item.
- **Twin Mirrors:** the PC reveals an ugly secret, either their own or someone else's.
- **Needle Claws:** The character sharpens its claws on the nearest suitable surface, marking it with both scratch marks and a territorial scent that aggravates similar oni.
- **Kansen Kindred:** The character spills blood, either their own or someone else's.
- **Serpent Venom:** The character sheds their old skin and reveals a new one, an action that renders the character motionless and unable to defend for one round.
- **Colossus:** The character flies into a rage, as described on page 31 of the core rulebook.

he'll send word to the guards at the border between Meido and Jigoku to let them through.

Once everyone is wearing their mask, read or paraphrase the following:

> At first, you feel nothing but smooth wood against skin. Then, something sticky seeps from the wood, adhering to your face. The mask grows painfully tight and you fumble for your head but the mask is drawing you in, consuming your skull. The mask works its way down, absorbing your spirit until there's nothing left of you at all.

The masks devour the PCs so they can be reborn as oni. Once in Jigoku, each PC retains their existing profile, but adds the power associated with their mask. The PCs also take on a suitably horrific appearance in their oni form. In addition to the abilities described in **The Masks** below, the GM and player should work together to determine each character's new appearance. These forms may have additional narrative effects, such as a snakelike tail instead of legs for the Serpent Venom mask.

The Masks

The following oni masks are available for the PCs' selection. The GM might invent additional masks and powers.

Breath of Evil: This mask has a huge gaping mouth that constantly emits a noisome vapor. The oni can infuse its breath with the Tainted energy of Jigoku and gains the following Martial Arts [Unarmed] profile: Tainted Breath (Range 1, Damage 6, Deadliness 4, Unholy).

Twin Mirrors: This mask with large, silvery eyes, allows the oni to see things beyond the sight of most demons and reflect whatever it chooses in its eyes, mesmerizing its victims. As a Scheme action, the oni may choose a target at range 0–1 and learn one advantage or disadvantage as well as their composure and current strife. As an Attack action, it may choose one target at range 0–1, who must make a successful **TN 3 Meditation check (Void 2, Fire 4)** or gain the Disoriented condition.

Needle Claws: This mask is a mass of needle-sharp spikes. The oni can extend or retract long, sharp claws as a free action, and gains the following Martial Arts [Unarmed] profile: Needle Claws (Range 0, Damage 6, Deadliness 8, Concealable).

Kansen Kindred: This mask is bone white and bears a treacherous smile. This oni is able to communicate and manipulate kansen, who are drawn to it. The oni can perform mahō without the need to make a proper sacrifice. In addition, the oni gains the Incite Haunting, Grip of Anguish, and Sinful Whispers mahō (see pages 224 and 225 of the core rulebook).

Serpent Venom: This mask is green and scaly with a forked tongue. This oni has poison glands under its tongue, and it can spit with surprising speed and accuracy. As an Attack action, this oni can spit its venom at any target within range 1. The victim must make a **TN 4 Fitness Check** to dodge the venom. A successful spit causes temporary blindness in the target, which lasts one round.

Colossus: This mask looks like it has been crudely carved from a chunk of grey rock and has squat, blunt horns extending from its forehead. This oni has a solid, powerful body and can put enough force behind its punches to destroy rock or flatten a foe. A PC who chooses this mask becomes silhouette 4 and gains the following Martial Arts [Unarmed] profile: Massive fists (Range 0–1, Damage 8, Deadliness 4). Once per scene, as an Attack action, the oni can put all its power behind a single punch, breaking through a stone wall or similar surface or object.

Part Two: Jigoku, the Realm of Evil

In Part Two, the PCs are reborn in Jigoku as oni in order to undertake their mission for Burakakin. The PCs are free to explore Jigoku, but must face its many dangers. The PCs should hear rumors of a potent Phantasmal Oni that claims to do Fu Leng's bidding. Ultimately, the PCs must find records of the Phantasm's subterfuge in the dread Fortress of Fu Leng. To make sense of these coded plans, they must also retrieve the cipher held by the Word-Hungry Oni, who dwells in the Repository of All Knowledge.

With the evidence in hand, the PCs must travel to the border between Jigoku and Meido, guarded by the Tenth Kami, Ryoshun. The PCs must either convince him of the truth of their mission or find another way back to Meido.

DYING AS DEMONS

PCS AS ONI

While a Player Character is an oni, they are an Otherworldly being of silhouette 2 or 3 (unless their mask specifies otherwise). PC oni are not necessarily Tainted, although the other oni of Jigoku are likely to assume they are. The Taint is everywhere in Jigoku, and there are many opportunities for incautious PCs to gain the Afflicted condition.

The PCs are mere shades in Part One and cannot be killed. However, once they are reincarnated as oni, this is no longer the case. If PCs die as demons, they return as demon shades to Meido, and an impatient mazoku guard escorts them straight to the mask room, where the masks of any slain PCs have reappeared, and sends them back again. (The PCs can choose different masks each time.) The PCs are reborn as oni as many times as it takes, so the GM need not hold back when presenting the dangers of Jigoku.

It is up to the GM where in Jigoku a character is reborn, which should generally feel unpredictable. However, any slain PCs should emerge together in the same general locale in Jigoku, and near any survivors of the fatal encounter, so as not to disrupt the game by keeping the PCs separated unnecessarily. Generally, PCs reborn in Jigoku should not have to immediately deal with the same danger that previously killed them, as this might prove frustrating for players.

THE LANDSCAPE OF JIGOKU

Jigoku is a dark, sprawling network of caverns and pits where oni carve dens for themselves out of the rock. It feels oppressive and entrapping, but its structure is actually mutable for oni clever or powerful enough to manipulate it. Therefore, the landscape is forever changing, and while one cavern might feel scorching hot, with steam rising from cracks in the floor, the next cave might be icy cold. Each oni is different, and each makes its den to suit itself. However, not every hole is inhabited, as demons come and go, the stronger killing the weaker, only to be killed in turn.

There are also larger, ancient caverns, made for communal activities such as torture, training, or the worship of Fu Leng. The use of many of these has changed since Fu Leng ceased to make his presence known. His fortress remains the same as he left it, a spiked building with kansen swarming around its towers, as no demon dares usurp his seat of power.

REBORN IN EVIL

When the players are ready to begin Part Two, read or paraphrase the following:

> Jigoku is all around you; you're drowning in it and you're part of it. You try to rise, and the foul stuff comes with you—it is you, the sharp rocks your claws, the rough earth your flesh, the foul ooze your blood. You emerge in a cave. There's no light but you can see everything, every angle on every rock, the gills on sickly mushrooms growing from the walls; everything is so clear and detailed it hurts to look at it, but you can't close your lidless eyes. You're doomed to crawl the cramped tunnels and vast caverns of Jigoku, witnessing all the atrocities of the Realm of Evil, until you earn your escape. There are tunnels leading away in all directions, including up and down. Which one do you take?

The PCs might take a moment to examine themselves and each other before continuing, but if they remain too long in the tunnel an **Insectoid Oni** (see below) drops in from the tunnel above and immediately attacks. The PCs do not have any of their prior equipment in their new oni forms.

The GM is encouraged to let the PCs work out their new powers through trial and error, as their first use of them can be instinctual. The arrival of the Insectoid Oni offers an opportunity to do this, and though this oni is outnumbered, it has the ability to summon others of its kind. Alone, it probably wouldn't attack at all if it didn't find the PCs in its nest.

INSECTOID ONI

MINION — CONFLICT RANK: 3 1

The Insectoid Oni has two heads with a long, segmented body in between. With three pairs of wings, it can navigate the winding tunnels of Jigoku at speed, and since it can see through the eyes of all its kin, it usually keeps clear of trouble. Unusual in Jigoku, this oni does not fight with its own kind, though this might be because all Insectoid Oni are part of one larger oni. They are enemies of the Phantasmal Oni since the Phantasm attempted to manipulate them.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	6
01	GLORY	COMPOSURE	6
00	STATUS	FOCUS	6
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · DEFENSIVE	VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 2

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Many Eyes: Martial; *Physical*	**Squashable:** Martial; *Physical*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Venomous Bite: Range 0, Damage 4, Deadliness 6

Gear (equipped): Bristly carapace (Physical 2)

ABILITIES

Fast Flying: An Insectoid Oni is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 1 that can fly. It can move vertically and ignores the negative effects of terrain. It can reroll the results of any Movement action check it makes once.

Strength in Numbers: If the Insectoid Oni's fatigue exceeds half of its endurance or strife exceeds half of its composure, two more Insectoid Oni come to its aid at the end of the round if it is still alive.

The Terrain

In Jigoku, nothing can be trusted, from the oni living there to the rocky landscape itself. The sheer scale of Jigoku is unfathomable, and whole continents of ice, fire, or darkness might exist on various levels here. The Fortress of Fu Leng is the supernatural center of it all and, wherever oni wander, all roads eventually lead back to the fortress. That might be an advantage for the PCs when seeking information, but it is an obstacle to their escape (see **Obstacles** on page 25).

If the PCs visited Jigoku as mortals, they would find the realm utterly dark—save for those areas lit by sickly torches and corpse bonfires—and treat it as Defiled terrain. As oni, however, this is their natural environment and they suffer no ill effects.

ONI AND REINCARNATION

Over a millennium ago, Fu Leng crashed into Jigoku, permanently and radically changing the underworld. The oni of Jigoku, beings who existed to suffer for their prior sins, cast off their shackles and fully embraced the evil and corruption that they were supposed to rise above. The oni no longer perform their penance in preparation for a new life, but instead plot and work ceaselessly to spread evil and Taint in the service of Fu Leng or indulge their own personal wickedness. Why then would Emma-Ō sentence souls to be reincarnated in Jigoku, knowing that to do so only swells the ranks of the forces arrayed against him?

Unfortunately, Emma-Ō has little choice in the matter. Cosmic law requires that souls burdened by the karma of the greatest sins must be sentenced to Jigoku. Even with Emma-Ō's latitude for judgment, it is unavoidable. There is a greater problem, however: the Taint cannot be cleansed, in life or the afterlife. When a Tainted soul passes to Meido, the mazoku must move quickly to isolate it and send it on to Jigoku. To allow the Tainted being to linger in Meido, or to reincarnate it anywhere else, risks spreading the Taint to other realms.

MAHŌ IN JIGOKU

The PCs may also see kansen flitting about like shadows against the ceilings of the caverns, because they can both see and hear them in their demonic forms. This should be enough to let them know that mahō is usable in Jigoku (see page 224 of the core rulebook). Any of the PCs might be tempted to use mahō, but if they do, it is taken into account in their final judgment later.

THE GUIDE

Once the PCs leave the cavern, the Trickster Oni—who calls herself Torikkusutā—runs up behind to engage them in conversation. This oni is less horrific than most, and somewhat resembles a purple mazoku dressed in rags. She tells the PCs she was waiting for help to arrive and is glad to see them. She says she was sent to Jigoku to uncover the source of sabotage in Meido, but her partner was captured and now she's alone and can't complete her mission. This is all a lie. The Trickster Oni can see the truth of things, so she can sense the PCs' mission. If the PCs let her, she acts as a guide, helping them at least until such time as it seems useful to betray them. If the PCs find her papers later, they may learn that she was wrongly sent to Jigoku in the first place, though she does not remember her past life so doesn't know the truth (see **The Archive** on page 24).

Torikkusutā can suggest looking for evidence in the Fortress of Fu Leng. She conjectures that the fortress's archives (which she has seen) might hold records of whatever plot Jigoku is enacting.

TORIKKUSUTĀ, THE TRICKSTER ONI

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 2 / 6

Pretending to be a mazoku, the Trickster Oni gives her name as Torikkusutā. She is weaker than most oni and survives by keeping out of the way and tricking other oni into protecting her. This is what she does to the PCs, hoping they can keep her safe until she can find someone stronger to do the job. She does not reveal her ability on purpose, but her uncanny knack to know things she hasn't been told might become evident if the PCs keep her around long enough. She takes special delight in trickery and manipulation, though she does not create pain or chaos for their own sake. If she believes the PCs might escape Jigoku, she wants to go with them.

While Torikkusutā does not know the Phantasmal Oni's plots, if she encounters the Phantasm while with the PCs, she may use her ability to determine that it believes it is serving Fu Leng's bidding by corrupting mazoku, encouraging oni to infiltrate Meido, and generally sabotaging the administration of the underworld.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
02	HONOR	ENDURANCE	8
02	GLORY	COMPOSURE	10
00	STATUS	FOCUS	5
+2, –2	DEMEANOR - DEFENSIVE	VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 1 | MARTIAL 0 | SCHOLAR 2 | SOCIAL 3 | TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Excellent Liar: Social; *Interpersonal*

DISADVANTAGES

Fear of Pain: Martial; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Claws and Fangs: Range 0, Damage 4, Deadliness 6

Gear (equipped): Tattered rags

ABILITIES

Sense Truth: The Trickster Oni is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. As a Scheme action, she may make a **TN 2 Meditation check** to learn one fact about any target at range 0–1. For each bonus success, the Trickster Oni learns one additional fact.

ONI

Oni are powerful, terrifying creatures that few PCs are likely to have encountered before. Even those who have fought oni in the Shadowlands might be overwhelmed by the sheer number and variety of oni in Jigoku. These



demons include ones too weak to escape into the Shadowlands, as well as powerful, ancient demons with no desire to do so—at least not until the right moment. Some oni are horrifying to look upon but ignore other demons, while others appear small and weak but have ways of preying on unsuspecting new arrivals.

Different oni want different things. Some like eating other demons to absorb power, or just enjoy the taste of corrupted souls. Other oni like to torment, frighten, or trick other demons. Some are just unpredictable and best avoided. To enter as a mortal would be certain death, but as demons the PCs have a chance to survive. If the PCs betray their true nature or purpose however, there are plenty of demons devoted to Fu Leng who immediately see them as the enemy.

Several oni are presented as NPCs to populate this realm. The GM might also use oni from other supplements, create new ones, and include particular oni the PCs banished back to Jigoku in previous adventures. The PCs face real danger here; if they do not survive, they return to Meido to be reincarnated into Jigoku for another chance (see **Dying as Demons** on page 14). However, if they are revealed as outsiders, some oni would throw them into **the Shrieking Oubliette** (see page 20) to await Fu Leng's return, however long that might be.

Demon Duels

The oni of Jigoku are perpetually fighting amongst themselves, struggling for dominance over one another. Fu Leng (so they say) long ago introduced demon duels as a way of allowing even the strongest oni to prove themselves, without the mass destruction of an all-out fight. They fight in a debased version of Rokugani duels, though oni don't always follow the rules. Still, understanding the basics gives the PCs a way of proving their strength to other demons, perhaps enabling them to move through the realm unchallenged.

Duels in Jigoku are never to first blood, but continue until there is a clear winner. This usually means one of the combatants is unconscious, dead, or otherwise unable to continue the fight. These duels are therefore dangerous, but if the PCs can win a duel or two, this should put off most demons from picking fights with them. It is near impossible to deny a challenge and, as the PCs are new to Jigoku, they are likely to be challenged early on as oni test them out to see where they stand in the pecking order.

Other demons flock to these spectacles, as they are one of the few forms of entertainment in the realm. The audience is generally loud and, if overexcited, spectators might take a swipe at one of the fighters themselves. Some oni like to take trophies when they duel, by snapping off a horn or claw from the opponent, pulling a tooth, or tearing off a limb. If a duelist dies, the audience might steal mementos, too.

> ❁ **Demonic Duel (to incapacitation or death):** The duel continues until there is an indisputable victor. Duelists may not concede.

Any oni that senses weakness in the PCs might challenge them, but the **Bladed Oni** (see overleaf) takes a particular pleasure in defeating duelists before an audience, so is likely to seek them out.

ONI PROFILES

Several unique oni the PCs might encounter are profiled in this adventure, but the forms of Fu Leng's minions are limitless. For those oni who don't receive unique profiles, use the Sinister Oni profile on page 320 of the core rulebook. You should feel free to add templates or otherwise customize this profile to keep encounters interesting and meet the needs of your game. For guidance and rules on creating your own oni, see page 134 of *Shadowlands*.

Bladed Oni

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 6 2

This demon's features are hidden beneath metal armor fused to its flesh, with arms like katana and razor-sharp spikes all over its body. It likes to keep trophies of its victims in a heap in its lair. Its weak points are its mouth and eyes, which it protects in battle.

While this oni enjoys victory, it is one of the few oni who likes rules, so it duels relatively fairly. This makes it a natural enemy of the chaos-spreading Phantasmal Oni. If the PCs ask about the sabotage in Meido, the oni warns them to watch for a cloud or fog.

The Bladed Oni is always keen to test its mettle against new opponents. If the PCs suggest that an opponent like the Guardian Oni (see **Gaping Maw**, below) or a Captain Oni (see **Training Grounds** on page 19) might best it, it seeks out this new challenge.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
05 HONOR		ENDURANCE	15
08 GLORY		COMPOSURE	10
00 STATUS		FOCUS	7
+2, –2 DEMEANOR - BLOODTHIRSTY		VIGILANCE	2



ARTISAN 0 | MARTIAL 4 | SCHOLAR 0 | SOCIAL 3 | TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Feels No Pain: Martial; *Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Overconfidence: Martial; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Blade Arm: Range 2, Damage 4, Deadliness 6, Razor-Edged

Spiked Limbs: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5, Snaring

Gear (equipped): Armored flesh (Physical 4)

ABILITIES

Poor Loser: If at any time during a duel the Bladed Oni's current fatigue exceeds its opponent's, it gains the Enraged condition. If the Bladed Oni becomes Compromised, it may unmask by gaining the Enraged condition.

ROOTING OUT CORRUPTION

To fulfill the task given to them by the mazoku, the PCs must ultimately uncover the identities of the compromised mazoku in Meido. They might start by looking for Fu Leng's fortress and searching for paperwork, but there are other ways of gathering information:

- The PCs might find relevant papers inside the fortress, within the **Archive** (see page 24). The list they need is here, but it is unreadable without the cipher found on the skin of the oni in **The Repository of All Knowledge** (see page 20).
- The Phantasmal Oni has manipulated plenty of other oni and has made resulting enemies. Either an agent of the Phantasm (such as the Word-Hungry Oni) might let something slip, or an enemy (such as the Insectoid Oni) might deliberately tell the PCs of the Phantasm's plans. The PCs might question, trick, or force either oni into giving them information. The PCs cannot learn the names this way, but can learn exactly where the list and the cipher are.
- Oni like the Captains, the guardian of the Gaping Maw, and the Phantasmal Oni claim to be serving Fu Leng's wishes, and are all wary of each other. The PCs might use this to turn them against each other, making their journey through Jigoku easier and possibly getting some information on the Phantasm, which many other oni see as a rival or enemy.

EXPLORING JIGOKU

There are innumerable tunnels and caverns for the PCs to explore in Jigoku, some occupied, some long forgotten, some so vast they could hold all of Rokugan. The GM should feel free to create any number of strange places for the PCs to visit, and to populate them with anything and everything the PCs might fear the most. As tunnels move and change, there is no need to keep track of where anything is. This section describes just a few of the notable locations PCs might encounter in upper levels of Jigoku that lie close to Meido.

The River of Blood

This river flows with the foul ichor of Jigoku, the same stuff that serves as blood within the PCs' and other oni's demonic forms. Any oni, including the PCs, can drink from the river to restore their physical forms once per day, healing all fatigue and removing the Bleeding, Dying, and Wounded conditions. Any oni the PCs injure but do not destroy might come here to recuperate, but others come here looking for easy prey.

Gaping Maw

A possible, but difficult, route out of Jigoku, the Gaping Maw corresponds to the Festering Pit in Ningen-dō. Oni who climb or fly up this long tunnel eventually reach the Shadowlands. For most oni, the journey is too long and arduous, but kansen flit in and out regularly. Some oni

might consider slipping into Ningen-dō to grab a mortal as a snack, but have to consider both the distance to travel and the poor likelihood of finding anything but a stringy goblin near the Festering Pit on the other side.

Another deterrent to escape, a mighty Guardian Oni sits beneath the maw, barring passage except to those it declares worthy. The demon claims Fu Leng made it master of the Gaping Maw, to ensure only worthy oni could pass. Of course, the oni may merely be picking fights for its own amusement. This powerful oni gains the **Warrior** template, and its wings allow it to fly.

Training Grounds

Once the site of an enormous battle, evidence of destruction is everywhere in this cavern. Scorch marks, piles of rubble, and a carpet of bones remain even though the battle took place generations ago. The stink of death seems somehow even stronger here than in the rest of Jigoku. A pair of powerful oni calling themselves "Captains" have turned this site into a training ground, where they attempt to forge an army worthy of Fu Leng himself. The ranks of their small army march incessantly around the grounds, engaging in mock battles. The captains attempt to conscript any oni who wander into this cavern, by force if necessary.

Weapon Forges

A towering, heavily muscled oni oversees the work here, in what used to serve as a torture chamber. Fires that once tormented souls now melt metal to be forged into weapons for oni to wield. Chunks of obsidian mined from the walls of the cave are shaped into crude weapons for the army in the Training Grounds. The overseer claims this is all done at Fu Leng's will, and any demons who enter the forge are quickly put to work.

The PCs may potentially find any type of weapon within the forges, although the Captain does not willingly part with any. Any item from the forges has the Forbidden and Unholy qualities.

Maze of Lost Souls

The area known as the Maze of Lost Souls seems deliberately designed to confuse all who enter. Many infuriated oni wander its narrow, winding tunnels endlessly, looking for an escape. The PCs might enter by accident, only learning they are inside the maze once nonsensical riddles start appearing on the walls. To begin, read or paraphrase the following:

> The tunnel splits in three directions, left, right, and ahead. Each branch of the tunnel looks the same. Above each, an inscription is scratched deep into the rock:
>
> The left says: 'The hand that does not grasp is quickly severed.'
>
> The middle says: 'Those who do not fight find enemies wait on both sides.'
>
> The right says: 'Only the fallen can rise.'

The GM might present the PCs with many choices, enough to make them feel thoroughly lost. Some tunnels bear no inscriptions, while the GM may add personal messages to others, such as "those who walked the path of the warrior in life dare not walk this way in death." The warnings may lead to oni NPCs, or never be realized. The maze is senseless, changing, unmappable, and generally designed to confuse and frustrate those inside.

A PC with vigilance 3 notices that some tunnels rise while others go deeper. The PCs need to follow the deeper tunnels, and once they figure this out they come across an inscription that reads: "To walk the path you know is to walk backward." If the PCs then backtrack, they find themselves in the center of the maze where they discover a small statue of an oni with a concave head, its facial features on the inside. The wisdom of the oni that made the maze is trapped inside the statue, and anyone touching it feels infused with knowledge. The PCs can only access this knowledge while holding the statuette, but if they speak aloud the inscription on its base, the oni is released. The maze-making oni attacks if the PCs cannot persuade it to do otherwise.

If the oni is released, the statue becomes an empty vessel and can be used to trap another oni. As an action while holding the statuette, a character may speak the inscription on the statuette's base and target one oni at range 0–4 with the Immobilized condition. The target oni must succeed at a **TN 4 Meditation check (Earth 3, Air 5)** or become trapped in the statuette, unable to interact with the world in any way. Any character may release a trapped oni by reading the inscription. The statuette can hold only one imprisoned oni at a time.

Lair of the Bladed Oni

This is where the Bladed Oni keeps its trophies, and if the PCs are lucky enough to come across it after defeating the oni, they might find all manner of strange items in its grisly collection—some even potentially useful. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The air in the small cavern is thick with the fetid odor of rotting flesh. In wall alcoves, pieces of oni stand like trophies: a thick bone, a metallic talon, a broken skull. From one, a pair of slitted eyes watches you, while in another a forked tongue flaps feebly against the rock.

Most of the trophies are body parts of oni, and the occasional scrap of armor or damaged weapon, with little obvious use or worth. Some oni body parts can be used as makeshift weapons, with the following profiles:

- **Demon Talon:** Range 0–1, Damage 2, Deadliness 4, Concealable, Unholy
- **Oni Bone:** Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 2, Unholy

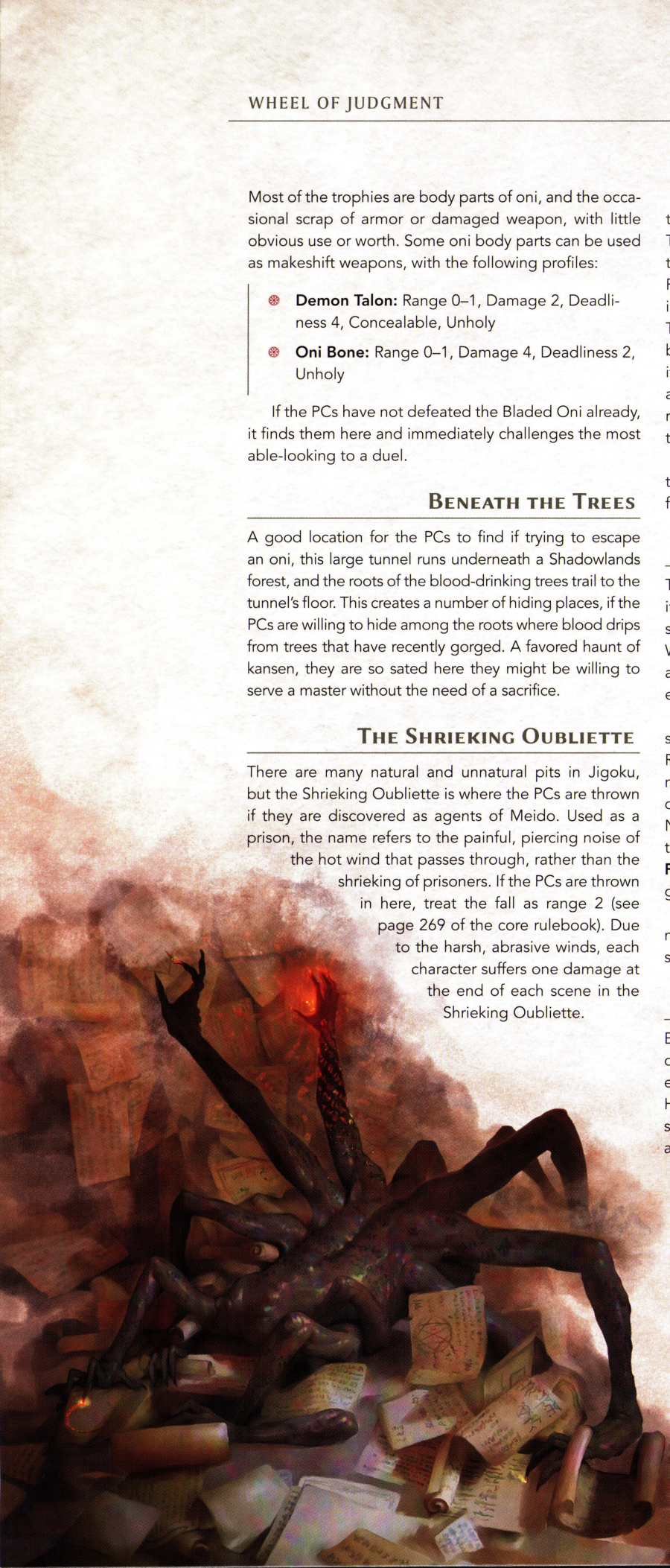
If the PCs have not defeated the Bladed Oni already, it finds them here and immediately challenges the most able-looking to a duel.

Beneath the Trees

A good location for the PCs to find if trying to escape an oni, this large tunnel runs underneath a Shadowlands forest, and the roots of the blood-drinking trees trail to the tunnel's floor. This creates a number of hiding places, if the PCs are willing to hide among the roots where blood drips from trees that have recently gorged. A favored haunt of kansen, they are so sated here they might be willing to serve a master without the need of a sacrifice.

The Shrieking Oubliette

There are many natural and unnatural pits in Jigoku, but the Shrieking Oubliette is where the PCs are thrown if they are discovered as agents of Meido. Used as a prison, the name refers to the painful, piercing noise of the hot wind that passes through, rather than the shrieking of prisoners. If the PCs are thrown in here, treat the fall as range 2 (see page 269 of the core rulebook). Due to the harsh, abrasive winds, each character suffers one damage at the end of each scene in the Shrieking Oubliette.



An **Insectoid Oni** (see page 14) is already inside the pit, protected from the winds by its chitinous shell. This oni can fly, but a spear has been used to pin it to the ground. It is the same type of oni as the one the PCs may have encountered upon entering Jigoku, and is part of the same hive mind, so it remembers them. The oni promises to carry the PCs out if they release it, but promises mean little here, and the PCs must ensure it cannot get away before it lifts them out. As this oni is an enemy of the Phantasm, the PCs might persuade it to reveal the nature and abilities of the Phantasmal Oni if they ask the right questions.

If the Insectoid Oni does escape, the PCs can attempt to climb out with a **TN 3 Fitness check**. A character who fails suffers fatigue equal to their shortfall on the check.

The Mirror of Worlds

This mirror is set in the ceiling of a round cave. While it does not allow access to the world above, the mirror shows glimpses of other realms, including Ningen-dō. Watching the mirror for too long mesmerizes the viewer, and the floor is littered with bones, scales, and other evidence of its past victims.

The GM can use the mirror to make the PCs' mission more urgent, if they see trouble back in the Mortal Realm they need to rectify. Of course, the mirror may not show a true reflection. The PCs could see someone die in the mirror, only to find they still live upon return to Ningen-dō. PCs who view the mirror gain 6 strife, which they can resist with a **TN 2 Meditation check (Void 1, Fire 3)**. If the character succeeds, they reduce the strife gained by 1 plus their bonus successes.

A PC with the Twin Mirrors oni power who views the mirror sees through the falsehoods and reduces their strife gained by 3.

The Repository of All Knowledge

Below the Lost Library of the Shadowlands, this vast cave contains a mountain of scrolls. The walls are covered with words painted in blood, the work of the Word-Hungry Oni who is always on the lookout for victims to serve as fresh ink. This creature lives among the scrolls and is hard to spot because its skin looks like parchment, kanji crawling slowly over it. It keeps its most important knowledge close, and this includes a cipher that is necessary to read the list found inside Fu Leng's Fortress. The cipher is on the back of one of the oni's hands, which only the oni knows. While all its other hands may attack the PCs, it is protective of this one, which a PC of Vigilance 3 or higher automatically notices. If the PCs take this hand by force, they must be careful not to destroy it when they subdue the oni. If the hand or cipher is lost, both regrow on the oni.

Word-Hungry Oni

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 7 5

This oni sits in the midst of a vast pile of scrolls. It is made of flesh and bone, and has many hands that are always moving, scratching words onto scrolls, the walls, and anything within reach. The kanji on its skin slowly crawl across its body, gradually shrinking to make space for new ones.

This oni absorbs knowledge but cannot contain it, which is why it must write everything down. Its hands look human but for one elongated nail on each that serves as a brush, and if the PCs look closely they find it's drawing with ink that runs through its body like blood.

Many secrets might be learned from the Word-Hungry Oni if it is bribed with fresh parchment or scrolls found and stolen without its knowledge. It hates most other oni, and would gladly drain the knowledge from the PCs and leave their demonic forms as empty husks—good for writing surfaces.

Note that the Word-Hungry Oni is an agent of the Phantasm, and if it learns of the PCs' purpose in Jigoku would send a message by detaching a hand and dispatching it with a scroll to find the Phantasm, seeking it in the Fortress.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	20
03	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12
00	STATUS	FOCUS	7
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · INQUISITIVE	VIGILANCE	4



ARTISAN 2 | MARTIAL 2 | SCHOLAR 4 | SOCIAL 1 | TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES

Well-Read: Scholar; *Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Overwhelmed: Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Clawing hands: Range 0–1, Damage 5, Deadliness 4, Snaring

Gear (equipped): Demonic flesh (Physical 1, Spiritual 1)

ABILITIES

Absorb Knowledge: The Word-Hungry Oni is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. By placing a hand directly on a victim's flesh, the oni can draw knowledge from them, gaining one piece of information per round as long as it maintains contact (this includes any target Immobilized by the oni's clawing hands). After 1 round, the victim gains the Disoriented condition (see page 272 of the core rulebook). After 4 rounds, the victim gains the Muteness (Air) disadvantage (see page 126 of the core rulebook).

Flurry of Hands: When making a Strike action using its clawing hands, the Word-Hungry Oni may spend ✲ as follows:

> ✲+: If the oni succeeds, deal 5 physical damage to the target or to another target at range 0–1 per ✲ spent this way.

Hand Separation: As a Support action, the Word-Hungry Oni may detach a hand, which then uses the **Word-Hungry Hand** profile. Up to ten hands may operate independently at a time. If any remain detached when the oni sleeps, it begins to grow a new hand in its place, leaving the extra hand to roam until destroyed.

Word-Hungry Hand

MINION CONFLICT RANK: 1 1

Even detached, this hand retains the desire for knowledge. Though it obeys the will of the Word-Hungry Oni, it cannot resist the temptation of nearby victims, crawling after them with alarming speed.



ENDURANCE	4	FOCUS	3
COMPOSURE	4	VIGILANCE	2

+2, –2 DEMEANOR · INQUISITIVE

ARTISAN 0 | MARTIAL 1 | SCHOLAR 1 | SOCIAL 0 | TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Dreadful Grip: Martial; *Physical*

DISADVANTAGES

Dulled Senses: Trade; *Mental, Physical*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Claw: Range 0, Damage 3, Deadliness 4

Gear (equipped): Demonic flesh (Physical 1, Spiritual 1)

ABILITIES

Ink-Blooded: Word-Hungry Hand is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 0. It cannot speak but can communicate by writing with its elongated finger.

Absorb Knowledge: By touching a victim's flesh, the hand can draw information from them, gaining one piece of information per round as long as it maintains contact. After 1 round, the victim gains the Disoriented condition (see page 272 of the core rulebook). After 4 rounds, the victim gains the Muteness (Air) disadvantage (see page 126 of the core rulebook).

THE DARK KAMI

Some oni speak of Fu Leng as though he might appear at any moment, while others bemoan the fact that his downfall has left them leaderless. Few oni would ever dare speak his name with anything less than reverence, let alone claim his throne, but some invoke his name to get other oni to do their will, claiming it is the Kami's. Whether this is true, and in what sense, it is impossible to say.

Fu Leng's Fortress

The one location that never moves or changes, this obsidian-walled fortress lies in an enormous cavern deep in the heart of Jigoku. When the PCs first reach the fortress, read or paraphrase the following:

> The fortress towers above you as you enter a cavern so large there is no visible ceiling, only the looming, horned towers of gleaming black obsidian and screaming kansen swarming like angry clouds. The fortress is windowless, yet it seems to watch you, showing your reflections in its walls as you approach. The air around it feels charged, as though before a storm. Nearby, a group of small, furred oni bickers and squabbles, but there are no guards, and no one challenges you as you move toward the open gate.

There are no visible guards at the fortress, but most oni keep out, as though afraid Fu Leng himself is watching. The oni that do go in are those with tasks the Dark Kami once gave them, which they continue in case he should return.

Kansen swarm inside and outside the fortress, though within they keep their voices hushed in respect for their absent master. The fortress isn't organized logically, but haphazardly, with rooms in odd places, corners at strange angles, corridors that go nowhere, and unfinished floors that may prove dangerous to the unwary.

Exploring the Fortress

Broadly speaking, the PCs can explore the fortress as they wish, unhindered. However, while the fortress lacks an organized guard force, many of the oni that might be found within are hostile to those they perceive as unworthy of Fu Leng's abode. If the GM wishes to underscore the danger of the fortress, they might include additional encounters with hostile oni (using the **Sinister Oni** profile from page 320 of the core rulebook) who question the PCs' right to be in the fortress and attack if the PCs don't convince them.

Physical hazards also await the PCs, stemming from the twisted nature of Jigoku's architecture to traps constructed to ward against outsiders. The following are just a few examples:

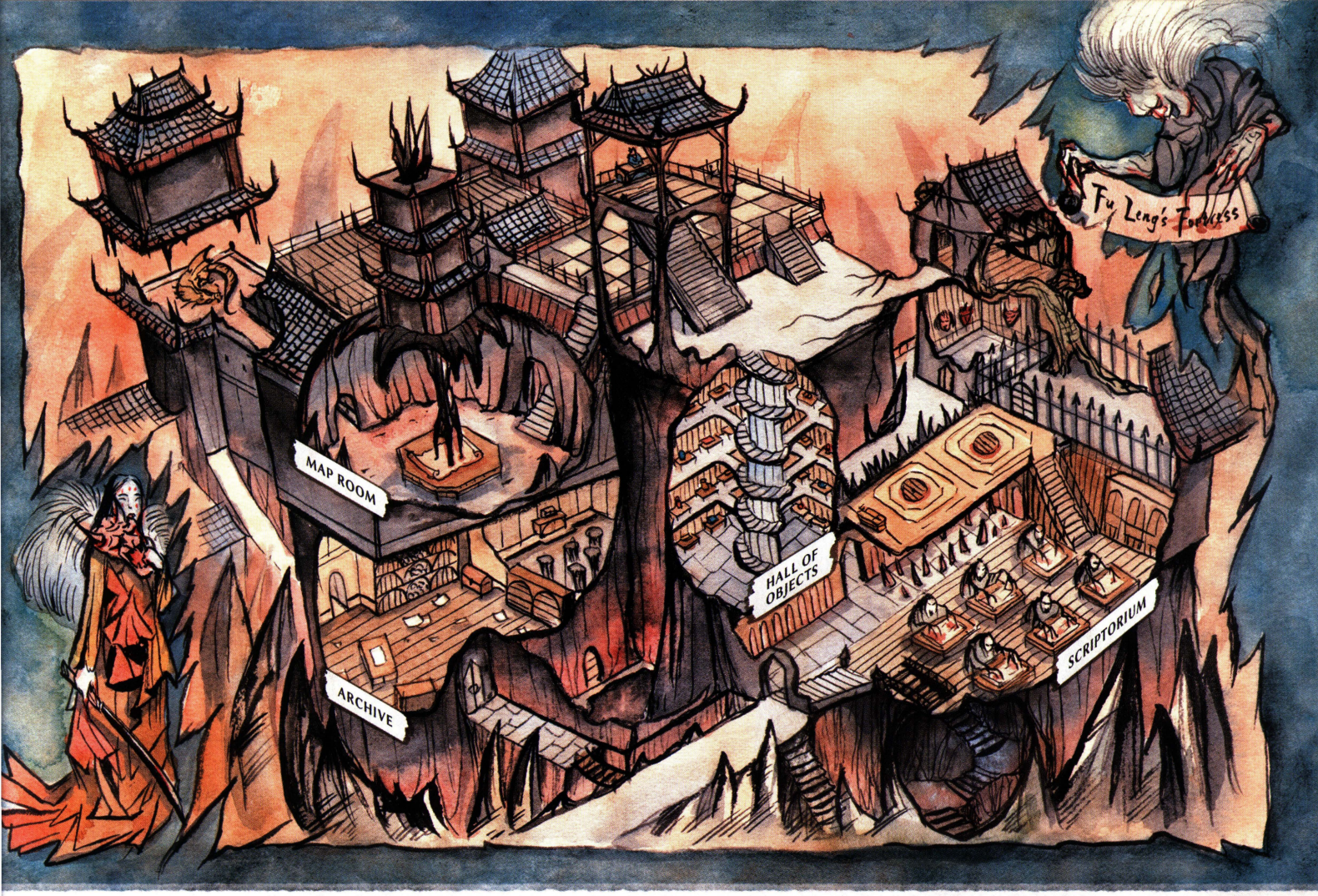
- A massive obsidian blade swings down from the ceiling or spears out from the floor, inflicting 7 damage with the Unholy quality on any PC with a Vigilance of less than 3.
- A crumbling section of floor gives way to a deep, magma-filled pit. Characters must succeed at a **TN 3 Fitness check (Air 2, Earth 4)** to leap clear before plunging to near-certain death.
- A hideous, impossibly loud roar of pain and rage reverberates down the corridor; each character must succeed at a **TN 4 Meditation check (Void 2, Fire 5)** or suffer strife equal to their composure and 1 fatigue. (It is impossible to determine the source of this sound, which occurs at unpredictable intervals across the years, but some oni claim it is the voice of Fu Leng himself.)
- A shōji screen of stretched demon skin suddenly flings itself at one of the PCs and attempts to envelop them; unless the character avoids it with a **TN 3 Fitness check (Air 2, Earth 4)**, they suffer the Immobilized and Disoriented conditions until they are freed. Any amount of damage inflicted on the shōji destroys it, but a character it is currently enveloping also suffers the damage. Another character can pull the shōji off with a **TN 4 Fitness check (Earth 3, Water 5)**.

Hall of Objects

Along each side of this hall, powerful but strange artifacts rest on tables, where vases might in a Rokugani palace. These items have all been corrupted by the foul influence of Jigoku, and some are so warped or degraded it is impossible to tell what they once were. However, the demonic PCs might find something useful here, if they dare steal from the Fortress. The following are some items the PCs may take, though they might wonder why such useful items were left unguarded. Anyone who takes an item from this hall attracts the ire of the kansen, who pursue them in a fury, and gains the Afflicted (Void) condition (see page 271 of the core rulebook), unless they find a way to placate the kansen.

For each item, a **TN 3 Theology check** reveals its potential use, while any negative effects are only revealed if the character spends ☆☆ to learn them.

- **Obsidian Amulet:** The wearer of this eye-shaped amulet reduces the TN of checks they make to see through illusion by 1. Additionally, a mortal who wears it can see in darkness just like an oni.
- **Cloak of Skin:** This stiff, leathery cloak is made of the skin of a powerful *mahō-tsukai*, who bound kansen to his flesh. It provides physical resistance 1 and supernatural resistance 3. Worn with the hood up, the wearer appears as an aged and sinister human man. However, if worn for too long, the spirit of the mahō-tsukai returns to reclaim his flesh, and the wearer incurs the Haunting (Void) disadvantage (see page 122 of the core rulebook).



- **Twisted *Tokkuri*:** This white, porcelain flask is decorated with symbols of good luck and happiness, but the brushwork of each has been performed backward and the glaze infused with ill intent. Designed as a gift to bring a great lord low, anyone who drinks from it becomes a slave to their own vices, gaining an appropriate disadvantage.

The Map Room

There are no oni in this room, but spread out on a large table is an inked map of Jigoku. A **TN 2 Design (Void) check** or **TN 3 Theology check** reveals that this map is old and, since Jigoku is always changing, out of date. However, a few overlaps with other realms have been marked. While the map is not entirely reliable, it does correctly show the location of Ryoshun guarding the border between Jigoku and Meido, as well as the fact that there is an entrance to Gaki-dō near his position.

While this information might be useful to the PCs, if they attempt to take the map, they find it is attached to the table. If they tear it from the table, the map finally lifts free with a wet ripping sound, and blood pours over the table and onto the floor, slick and glistening. The underside of the map is red and raw like an open wound, and its hot blood soaks through the ancient images, blotting out all useful information and rendering the map a useless, gory mess.

The Scriptorium

In a square room, like the scriptorium the PCs may have visited in Meido, three scribes work—though there are four desks. They scratch words onto scrolls with their long, sharp fingers, rather than using brushes. These demons have eyes but no mouths, so the only sound they make is the scratching as they work. They appear to be kneeling at their desks, but if they notice the PCs they move toward them, dragging their bodies across the floor because they have no lower limbs.

The scribes exist for one purpose only, and that is to work. However, they have been left alone in their own silent company for so long, they have forgotten what they were supposed to be writing in the first place. What they write, as any PC who examines their scrolls learns, is nonsense.

THE HEART OF EVIL

Even for oni, the Fortress of Fu Leng is a place of dread and awe. For the PCs, who retain their human minds and personalities (mostly), it is even more horrible. You might choose to reinforce this through slowly building tension as the PCs explore the mazelike fortress, with ominous sounds, evidence of recent violence, and other frightening or disturbing phenomena. The danger could also be more immediate, with oni confronting the PCs and questioning their business in such a place, and even violently attempting to eject them.

Scribe of Jigoku

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK: 1 1

The scribes have a limited skill set, and without direction from their master they are purposeless. They may not be true oni at all, but tools made by Fu Leng from the fabric of Jigoku. All the scribes consider themselves servants of Fu Leng, while the one found in the archive is also an agent of the Phantasm. The PCs might question it by forcing it to write answers for them, but if they cause it too much distress it uses its Bodily Retreat ability to escape.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
00 HONOR		ENDURANCE	8
00 GLORY		COMPOSURE	8
00 STATUS		FOCUS	5
+1, –1 DEMEANOR - LOYAL		VIGILANCE	3



ARTISAN 2 | MARTIAL 0 | SCHOLAR 2 | SOCIAL 0 | TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES

Industrious: Artisan; *Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Silent: Social; *Physical*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Quill-like Finger: Range 0, Damage 1, Deadliness 2

ABILITIES

Bodily Retreat: The scribe is an Otherworldly, Tainted being that cannot speak. If Compromised or Incapacitated, it sinks into the floor, permanently reverting to its former state as part of the fabric of Jigoku.

The Archive

The archive is full of secrets. Not merely scrolls, but pictures painted in red ink, images of faces that appear sallow, decayed, or monstrous if viewed from the right angle. However, this is where the PCs can find their own papers and forgeries that have been copied, fresh ink turning their past deeds into crimes.

At the back of the room, another scribe is at work, copying stolen papers to ensure souls who have fulfilled their destiny are not reincarnated in better forms, but sent to Jigoku. A cloud of white mist hovers around this scribe, but dissipates if the PCs approach. This is the Phantasmal Oni (see page 28), which watches the PCs invisibly to see what they do.

If the PCs explore this room, the first to search the desk finds a scroll in a secret compartment, written in such a way that it appears to be a list. In fact, this is a list of mazoku working for or compromised by the Phantasmal Oni, and details the task assigned to each one. However, it is written in code, and making any sense of it requires the cipher from the Word-Hungry Oni. Some names, mazoku who were discovered or have been killed by the Phantasm, are crossed off.

The massive chamber contains documents compiled over centuries. Most of these have little meaning for the PCs; however, should the PCs search through the more recent records, they might recognize some of them as pertaining to residents of Jigoku they have encountered. These include:

- The original papers of Torikkusutā. If she is with them, she is drawn to this document and when she touches it, she realizes this details her previous, human life. She was a Togashi monk and should have returned to that order, if the Phantasm had not changed her fate.
- Information about other demons the PCs may encounter in this adventure. The Bladed Oni was a samurai who died in a duel, sent to Jigoku through the machinations of the Phantasm. The Word-Hungry Oni was a Kuni shugenja whose vile experiments earned her reincarnation as a demon. The Insectoid Oni were once *ashigaru* who committed atrocities as a unit, under the direction of a *taisa* who was reincarnated as the Captain Oni. The Captain was once a single oni but another demon cut it into three pieces.

The Phantasmal Oni

Once the PCs have visited the Fortress of Fu Leng, they draw the attention of the Phantasm. This is the oni behind the sabotage in Meido.

The Phantasm tells others that its mission came directly from Fu Leng himself, but never specifies when or how it received its orders. The problems it has caused in Meido add to the chaos there, and might serve as a distraction as Fu Leng's servants act elsewhere. Its powers of illusion make it the perfect saboteur, as it can sneak into Meido and manipulate weak minds.

This oni chooses not to manifest in Jigoku, but instead spies on the PCs and might seize an opportunity to hinder them using its abilities (see page 28). Illusions might serve to confuse or disorient the PCs, or even put them in harm's way. PCs might notice the Phantasm, in the form of a misty cloud, as it observes them or uses its abilities.

Later, the Phantasm manifests during the final battle in Meido, but until then cannot be harmed. The PCs might learn of the Phantasm during their interactions in Jigoku or by encountering it in the records room or during their trip through Gaki-dō (see page 26).



ESCAPING THE REALM OF EVIL

Once the PCs have found the list and cipher, they must escape back to Meido. They must pass Ryoshun, who guards the boundary between Jigoku and Meido, but Jigoku is not an easy realm to navigate. Having Torikkusutā as a guide might help. Alternatively, they may have seen the map in the Fortress of Fu Leng (see page 23) and know the way.

Obstacles

The GM may use optional encounters to complicate the PCs' escape back to Meido.

The Fortress

The Fortress of Fu Leng is the spiritual—and therefore physical—center of Jigoku, and all oni are drawn to it. The GM might illustrate this by having every wrong turn lead the PCs back here.

The Phantasm

The Phantasm itself follows the PCs, using its illusions to trick them into getting lost, stumbling into danger, or fighting each other. (See page 28 for details on the Phantasmal Oni's abilities.)

The Tenth Kami

When the PCs reach the border of Jigoku, read or paraphrase the following:

> A figure stands motionless in a stone archway, blue sky behind him. Dressed in antique armor, he towers over you, brandishing an enormous spear. Dark and shining eyes look down on you. When he speaks, his deep voice causes the rock to shake beneath your feet.
>
> "No demon may pass," he tells you. "I am Ryoshun, and so I have sworn."

The Kami has not received the message from Burakakin. The PCs do not know if someone has intercepted the message or if the maō was spinning lies to get rid of them in the first place. Even if the PCs can persuade Ryoshun of their mission, he has sworn never to let a demon into Meido. Depending on how the PCs act, he might be hostile or sympathetic.

If the PCs convince Ryoshun of their mission, he can tell them the quickest way through Gaki-dō, so they need not linger in that realm for long. He points toward a nearby tunnel mouth and tells them to keep to the left side of the river no matter what.

If the PCs fail to escape Jigoku, their mission has failed, and they are doomed to exist as oni. They must persuade Ryoshun to help them or find their own way through the Realm of the Hungry Dead. Even if the Kami does not direct them, they might remember enough of the map (see page 23) to find a path.

If any PC attacks Ryoshun, the GM can narrate the PC's swift defeat. Ryoshun's power is far beyond the PCs' abilities, and he knocks them back into Jigoku with a mere swipe of his spear. A PC can survive the experience with a successful **TN 3 Fitness check (Earth 2, Fire 4)**. If the PCs' defeat leaves the list of treacherous mazoku with the Kami, he takes time to study it. In this case, the next time the PCs reach Ryoshun, he does believe them. He returns the list to them and points them towards the way into Gaki-dō. Regardless of the importance of their mission, he cannot violate his vow.

Ryoshun might be sympathetic to the PCs but would never abandon his post to help them in Meido. He takes his position as guardian seriously.

THE FORGOTTEN KAMI

Ryoshun is the Tenth Kami, the brother who perished in Lord Moon's gut before Hantei could free his siblings. Although he is all but unknown in Rokugan, Ryoshun found an important calling upon arriving in the underworld. Ryoshun swore to protect Emma-Ō's realm from the predations of his wicked brother, Fu Leng, and so has guarded the passage between Jigoku and Meido since the Fall of the Kami.

For more about Ryoshun, see page 33 of *Celestial Realms*.

DEATH IS NO ESCAPE

If the PCs have died and returned to Meido before, they might conclude that dying as oni offers a quick and easy way back to Meido. The trouble with this approach is that the PCs cannot then carry the physical list of names with them. The list is extremely long, so memorizing it is near impossible. Even if the PCs succeed in remembering some of the names, they then lack the necessary proof to expose the saboteurs. Returning in this way also means the PCs lack demonic forms for the final battle, putting them at a disadvantage. If the PCs insist on dying, or die by accident, Burakakin might just send them right back to Jigoku again to complete the mission.

Part Three: Returning

In this part of the adventure, the PCs begin their journey through Gaki-dō and back to Meido. However, their demonic forms make the PCs natural enemies of the mazoku guards, so reaching Burakakin is difficult. The PCs might find themselves searching for, and even dealing with, some of the mazoku on the list of saboteurs in order to prove themselves and reach the relevant authorities. This part also includes the buildup to a final conflict against the Phantasmal Oni, advice for running that battle, and the adventure's conclusion.

GAKI-DŌ, THE REALM OF THE HUNGRY DEAD

The PCs have a long walk through the tunnel into Gaki-dō, the Realm of the Hungry Dead. The tunnel is narrow, too small for larger oni to utilize even if they knew about it. PCs might have encountered gaki, or hungry ghosts, in other adventures. However, seeing them in their realm, and through the eyes of oni, is certainly a new experience.

Once the PCs are inside the tunnel, read or paraphrase the following:

> After the darkness of Jigoku, the lightless tunnel is strangely familiar. It stretches on without turning or branching, and it seems you walk for days until a spot of weak grey light appears ahead. Finally, you emerge amid decaying ruins of crumbling stone and splitting wood under an oppressively grey sky. The deathly urban sprawl stops short of the bank of a sluggish, green-grey river that oozes through the shadows.

The PCs have entered the boundary between Meido and Gaki-dō, a region they can traverse in relative safety. While some gaki ignore the PCs, busily eating handfuls of mud or scooping up river slime, others attack anything in their attempt to sate their terrible hunger—even oni, as the occasional pile of picked-clean demon bones attests. If the PCs do not stay together, or get too close to the wrong gaki, they have to fend off a desperate, starving spirit.

Phantasmal Interference

Aware of the PCs' meddling, the Phantasmal Oni follows them into Gaki-dō. If it wasn't yet sure they are enemies, seeing them parley with Ryoshun before taking the passage into Meido confirms it. At some point before they reach the entrance to Meido, the Phantasm conjures an illusion of sumptuous food on and around the PCs to lure a large group of gaki, who attack ravenously and attempt to consume the PCs. This group includes at least twice as many gaki as PCs, and the GM should adjust the number to provide a suitable challenge according to the encounter rank guidance on page 310 of the core rulebook.

Gaki

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 1 1

These pitiful figures are more unpleasant than frightening. The gaki are starving spirits of those who indulged their appetites in their previous life, and now face a life of suffering before they have another chance in the Mortal Realm. While they appear insubstantial in Ningen-dō, in this realm they are wretched, emaciated beings. Always hungry, they eat anything and everything in the hope of satisfying their terrible need.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
00 HONOR		ENDURANCE	3
00 GLORY		COMPOSURE	3
00 STATUS		FOCUS	2
+2, –2 DEMEANOR · STARVED		VIGILANCE	1

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Ravenous: Martial; *Mental*

DISADVANTAGES

Insatiable: Social; *Spiritual*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Clawing Hands: Range 0–1, Damage 2, Deadliness 3, Snaring

Gnashing Teeth: Range 0, Damage 3, Deadliness 5

Gear (equipped): Tattered rags

ABILITIES

Hungry Ghost: A gaki is an Otherworldly being of silhouette 1. As a Scheme action, a gaki can consume any substance in hand to temporarily bolster its strength, increasing one of its ring values by two.

Leaving Gaki-dō

If the PCs follow Ryoshun's direction, they may pass through this realm and into Meido with minimal interaction with the gaki. However, if they did not receive directions or choose not to follow them, they might have additional run-ins with hungry gaki, or even become lost in the wilds or slums of Gaki-dō. To reach Meido, the

PCs must follow the left side of the river and exit the valley by the steeper side. Once the valley is out of sight, the PCs find themselves back in the steppes of Meido.

DEMONS IN MEIDO

Once in Meido, and having dealt with any pursuing gaki, the PCs can see the towers of the palace on the horizon. Approaching, they soon see the shades of the recently dead walking in the same direction, but now that they are demons these spirits appear less substantial. Any spirits who notice them (and are not Deadened) flee in terror. The spirits, animal and human alike, are afraid of the PCs' demonic forms, though the PCs have great difficulty physically interacting with any of these shades. This is the first sign that, as living demons, the PCs are not going to be welcome in the Realm of Waiting.

A band of mazoku guards, including Minroki, appears to drive them out of Meido. There should be one guard for each PC, and one for Torikkusutā if she is with them. Minroki does not recognize them and only a successful **TN 3 Courtesy check** or **TN 2 Performance check** can persuade him to believe the strange truth of their mission. If the PCs persuade Minroki, two of these mazoku have made deals with the Phantasm and, knowing the list implicates them, attack the PCs.

If the PCs fight and kill these guards, more soon come looking for them. An alarm sounds, as the mazoku spread the word of an oni invasion and rally their defense.

The Impostor

One of these guards is not only a saboteur, but an oni from Jigoku in disguise. The PCs might discover this if they check the list, possibly after being tipped off by the guard's unusual behavior. If Torikkusutā is with the PCs, she might see through the deception using her abilities. Exposing such an impostor would help prove the truth of the PCs' story to the other guards.

Once exposed, the oni reveals its true form and either fights or flees. Any shapeshifting oni can be represented using the **Sinister Oni** profile on page 320 of the core rulebook.

Proving their Intentions

The PCs might be concerned by the fact that Burakakin told no one about their mission, making their return to Meido harder. If they check the list for his name, he is not on it. In truth, Burakakin concealed the mission from all but a few trusted servants to prevent any compromised mazoku from learning of it or informing the oni behind the plot. The PCs may try to reach Burakakin in his office (see page 11) by fighting, sneaking, or talking their way past the mazoku, or they might take an alternative approach and seek help elsewhere:

- Rikakima is not on the list, and if the PCs have uncovered her transgressions, they may be confident in their dealings with her, and be assured of getting her to listen to them. They can find her at the gate where she was before. If she agrees to help, she escorts them to Burakakin or Kironobiri, whomever they decide to talk to.
- If the PCs want to speak to a daimaō superior to Burakakin, Kironobiri is the nearest one and is not on the list. He is in Office 822, overseeing its refurbishment for a new mazoku. Whether or not the PCs have met him before, they can show him the list to persuade him of the truth.
- Alternatively, the PCs may wish to seek out and reveal a few of the names on the list. Some of the mazoku have merely worked for the Phantasm, but some have been replaced by demons that can be revealed. (See **The Impostor**, above.) If the PCs have missed this opportunity, the GM might provide a convenient administrative mazoku as a shapeshifting oni.

The List

A complete list of saboteurs is too long to provide, but the PCs can check the list as they encounter NPCs, and the GM should inform them if the name is present or not. The four named mazoku from Part One are not saboteurs; though Rikakima is corrupt, her crimes are only minor. The jail keeper in charge of the Holding Cells in Part One is on the list and is a likely candidate for the PCs to use to prove their story. If they suspected this earlier, they may know to seek corroborating evidence in his office (see page 10).

The Relevant Authorities

Once the PCs have proved they are on a legitimate mission, Burakakin takes charge, and assures the PCs that once the traitors are dealt with, he can see to their promised reward. He sends messages to guards that are not on the list, organizes the capture of corrupt mazoku, and plans the destruction of oni who have infiltrated their ranks.

Enter the Phantasm

Before Burakakin's plan is carried out, the Phantasmal Oni appears and manifests, calling its allies to action. Read or paraphrase the following:

GLORY AND THE UNDERWORLD

PCs can gain glory as a result of their achievements during *Wheel of Judgment*, just as with any other adventure. It may seem odd that the PCs' reputations in Ningen-dō would benefit from their reputations among the mazoku, but it's really not surprising. The division between Rokugan and the underworld is not impermeable, and there are many ways for news of the PCs' deeds to filter back to the Mortal Realm. Certain spiritual beings pass between the realms, the spirits may reveal events from beyond to shugenja, and the Kitsu mediums can speak directly with the souls of the departed. However, news from beyond Ningen-dō is less well known in Rokugan, and many people may look upon such stories with skepticism. As a result, the glory rewards in this adventure are lower than those for similarly impressive accomplishments within Rokugan.

A shrill, insect-like buzzing builds to a painful crescendo as a misty form draws into itself, becoming a bulging white mass three stories tall that writhes and contracts and finally solidifies. Its new form has the appearance of marble: sickly pale with green veins, its slick surface reflecting the light and dazzling its enemies. Hideous horns sprout from its head, and its mouth moves ceaselessly, whispering commands to its allies.

SHADES AND DEMONS

While spirits and oni can interact with the landscape of Meido, only the mazoku can readily interact with both spirits and demons here. Any time an oni character attempts to attack a shade, or vice versa, increase the TN of the check by 2. This also applies to the PCs, whether they retain their oni forms or have reverted to shades. Mazoku are uniquely suited to interact with both shades of the dead and flesh-and-blood demons, and do not apply this increase.

BATTLE BETWEEN THE REALMS

With the manifestation of the Phantasmal Oni, oni that have been hiding in Meido now reveal themselves and attack the mazoku. These demons can be represented by the **Sinister Oni** profile on page 320 of the core rulebook, or others at the GM's discretion. Those nearby rush to the Phantasm's aid, while smaller skirmishes break out all across Meido.

The PCs might join the battle against the demons and, if so, they have an advantage because oni may not initially realize they are the enemy. When making initiative checks, PCs may spend ☘ ☘ to gain a free Attack action targeting any oni other than the Phantasm. The PCs might make full use of their demonic powers and fight, but any PC with Kansen Kindred is at a disadvantage here because there are no kansen in Meido. However, this also means the PCs must stay close to mazoku who know their story, or risk being attacked by both sides.

If the PCs do not wish to fight and attempt to keep clear of the battle, they find the Phantasmal Oni has a personal vendetta against them, knowing they were the ones who stole the list from Jigoku. The Phantasm pursues them and uses its Powerful Illusions ability to attempt to trap them, making it appear that there is a wall ahead of them, a pit open before them, or some other obstacle to block their retreat.

Mazoku fight against demons, though as an option there may be a few corrupt mazoku off the list who attempt to join in against their own. The number of combatants need not be large, as the Phantasm is very powerful, and this final battle can be run as a skirmish (see pages 262-264 of the core rulebook). If the Phantasm is defeated, the rest of the oni scatter and the mazoku pick them off, so the battle is won.

PHANTASMAL ONI

ADVERSARY — CONFLICT RANK: 12 8

Manifested physically, the Phantasmal Oni is large and fearsome. Its skin is hard as stone and repels mundane weapons. It uses the fabric of the realm to manifest, so in Meido appears to be made of marble (if it manifested in Jigoku, it would appear obsidian or molten). In solid form it is slow, but it retains its power of illusion.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	22
10	GLORY	COMPOSURE	16
00	STATUS	FOCUS	8
+2, –2	DEMEANOR · VINDICTIVE	VIGILANCE	5



ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 3	SOCIAL 4	TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Stone Resilience: Martial; *Physical*	**Lumbering:** Martial; *Physical*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Marble Hands: Range 1–2, Damage 8, Deadliness 4, Snaring

Stone Stomp: Range 0, Damage 10, Deadliness 6

Gear (equipped): Stone form (Physical 5, Spiritual 5)

ABILITIES

Phantasm: The Phantasmal Oni is an Otherworldly being of silhouette 4. As an insubstantial cloud, the Phantasm cannot physically interact with its environment or other characters, reduces all physical damage it suffers to 0, and cannot suffer critical strikes. It can use its powers of illusion in this form and can communicate in an audible whisper. As an Attack and Scheme action, the oni may take on tangible form, creating a body from the physical structure of its environment (usually stone); it then obeys all normal rules and uses the weapons and gear noted in this profile.

Powerful Illusions: As a Scheme action, the Phantasmal Oni may summon an illusion at range 0–6. The illusion can be of almost any size or complexity; for example, it might entirely replace the viewers' environment and contents, or simulate actions taken by particular characters. The illusion encompasses all the senses, so that it feels real to the touch and can even cause pain. A character who has reason to suspect the illusion is false may attempt to see through it as a Scheme action, making a **TN 4 Meditation check (Void 3, Fire 5)**. If the check is successful, the character sees the world as it really is, though others remain affected. The GM may also allow a character to make this check to avoid making a huge mistake (such as attacking an ally or putting themself in physical danger) as a result of the illusion.

Is This the End?

As the Phantasmal Oni dies, it creates an illusion that it grows stronger and defeats everyone. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Just when it seems the great oni is weakening, its body emits a sudden light, and in the blinding flash, three duplicates of the massive demon appear, crushing the offices and gates of Meido with their fists and trampling mazoku beneath their huge stone feet. The ground shakes beneath them and spirits scatter and flee in all directions. The realm is surely lost.

For a brief moment, the PCs might believe they have lost. They may make an appropriate check to see through the illusion, but the TN increases by 1 as the oni puts all its power into this last attempt to confuse its enemies. Either way, the oni dies and the illusion fades.

> Broken buildings are restored, fallen mazoku back on their feet. The massive oni lies with its stone arms shattered, its mouth silenced. The realm is saved.

In the aftermath, Burakakin (or Kironobiri) finds the PCs and tells them they have earned their reward. Then he asks the PCs to gather around him before transporting them all to the gates of Emma-Ō's palace.

Should the PCs pass the queue for any reason, they see some of the NPCs they met at the beginning of the adventure. Reju Tabito (see page 5) might call out and ask them to promise to help Akio if they return to Ningen-dō. The merchant Hirosi is still near the back of the line.

Failure

If the PCs truly fail to stop the Phantasm, such as if they are all defeated, Emma-Ō himself ultimately arrives to battle the oni. The Fortune of Death is victorious in the end, but the destruction is great, leaving many mazoku shades waiting in queue and that many fewer mazoku to process the correspondingly greater workload. Burakakin and Emma-Ō honor their promises to the PCs, recognizing that the foe was simply beyond their powers, and are grateful to them for exposing its plot.



Final Judgment

The PCs at last arrive at the Palace of Emma-Ō (see page 10), to face their final judgment. First, if the PCs are still in their oni forms, Burakakin explains those aren't suitable. Fluttering his tessen, he tells them to hold still. With relish, Burakakin slits their throats one by one, so that their shades slip free once more.

When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following:

> The court is vast, and light shines in through an open ceiling. Mazoku kneel to either side of a dais, which bears a throne of polished glass. Seated there, a divinely imposing and regal figure, clad in ornate robes of office, regards you thoughtfully. Burakakin tells you, "Bow before the Great Emma-Ō, Judge of the Dead!"

Once the PCs show the proper respect, Burakakin summarizes their actions over the course of the adventure, mentioning any sins they might have committed, as well as occasions where they resisted desire or fear. This is a personal summary, so is left up to the GM, who might make this as long or short as desired. If the PCs took on the mission for the promise of a reward, or stated other reasons for helping, Burakakin mentions this.

When he is finished, Burakakin offers the PCs a chance to speak their own case. They might also take this opportunity to make any requests, such as the following:

- That they be allowed to return to Ningen-dō.
- That they can take any items they found with them or have any items they had at the time of death returned to them.
- That they may return to their former lives in a particular time or place.
- That Torikkusutā be given another chance as a human, since she was wrongly sent to Jigoku.

It is up to the GM to decide if the PCs performed well enough for any requests to be granted. The outcome is only revealed once they return to Ningen-dō. If the PCs used mahō in Jigoku or otherwise embraced the Taint of that realm, they might also return with the Afflicted condition assigned to one or more rings, at the GM's discretion.

Once the PCs finish speaking, the daimaō Kironobiri offers a conclusion:

> Kironobiri steps forward and addresses the Fortune. "These souls have performed a great service for Tengoku and the Celestial Order. Yet this service falls outside of their dharma, as a soul accrues karma only in life, not after." He holds up your paperwork to illustrate this point before he continues.
>
> "Therefore, no proper judgment can be made for these souls, who have done so virtuously.
>
> "Oh great Fortune of Death and Judge of all Souls, I say that since no proper accounting of these mortals' karma is possible, they must return to Ningen-dō to continue their lives."

The court falls silent for a moment as everyone waits for the Fortune of Death to pass judgment. This is an important moment and, although the Fortune is careful and reserved with his words, he may remark on the PCs' notable actions—both good and ill.

Read or paraphrase the following:

> The Divine Emma-Ō speaks in a deep and powerful voice that causes the great chamber to tremble. He explains that no one can violate the cycle of life and death. Yet, he needs time to consider your most unusual case. He suggests that you enjoy his garden while you wait, particularly the very fine view from atop the hill.

RETURN

Burakakin ushers the PCs backwards out of the room, and the PCs find themselves in a manicured garden. In the center of the garden is a small, plain hill that looks out of place.

With a wink, Burakakin reminds the PCs what a great, even unprecedented, honor this is for recently deceased mortals. He then leaves the PCs to explore the garden. When they climb the little hill, they find themselves immediately back in Ningen-dō, at a location and time decided by the GM. They might be in a position to pick up a previous adventure or have to travel back to where they started.

Any lingering effects or consequences of their exploits in the underworld should soon become apparent and might require action from the PCs. If the PCs successfully beseeched Emma-Ō to give Torikkusutā another chance, they may find a Togashi monk standing with them, her memories hazy. Unless the PCs requested otherwise during their hearing, they retain the memories of their experiences in the underworld, though they might have a dreamlike quality.

Other Rewards

For accomplishing their objective of uncovering and defeating the threat to Meido, each PC should receive 6 glory. Shugenja characters gain an additional 3 glory, as news of such deeds is better known within their circles.

Further Adventures

Assuming the PCs weren't in the middle of an adventure before they died—or even if they were—the GM may inflict the following misfortunes on the PCs to propel them into further adventures:

- If the PCs made any promises to spirits while in the underworld (such as to Reju Tabito, see page 5), they must fulfill them in a timely manner. Those who renege gain the Haunted adversity.
- The PCs suffer from terrible nightmares of their memories of Jigoku until they go on a pilgrimage or take other strong actions to purify themselves.
- A shade from Meido or gaki from Gaki-dō, or even a kansen or oni if the PCs brought back any items from Jigoku (intentionally or otherwise), secretly travels back with the PCs and begins causing trouble. The PCs may even be blamed if their arrival in a locale coincides with the supernatural activity.

Future Deaths

If the PCs die again during their adventures, they might return to Meido and attempt to negotiate their return again. Since the Phantasmal Oni is already dealt with, the PCs would have to find alternative ways of helping the mazoku and impressing their superiors, but these would have to be truly exceptional to receive such a special gift again. The GM might offer new opportunities for the PCs to prove themselves, such as an invasion of gaki, or a campaign to rescue souls wrongly sent to Jigoku. However, the GM should be wary of allowing PCs to cheat death again. Such a return to life is exceedingly rare. If samurai face death bravely, this should be a sign of their dedication and training, and their readiness to face their next incarnation, not of an assurance that they might return to life.

There are other ways to continue mortal adventures, such as allowing PCs to create a new character in the same family or finding ways to revive a dying PC at the last moment. See page 299 of the core rulebook for further discussion.

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