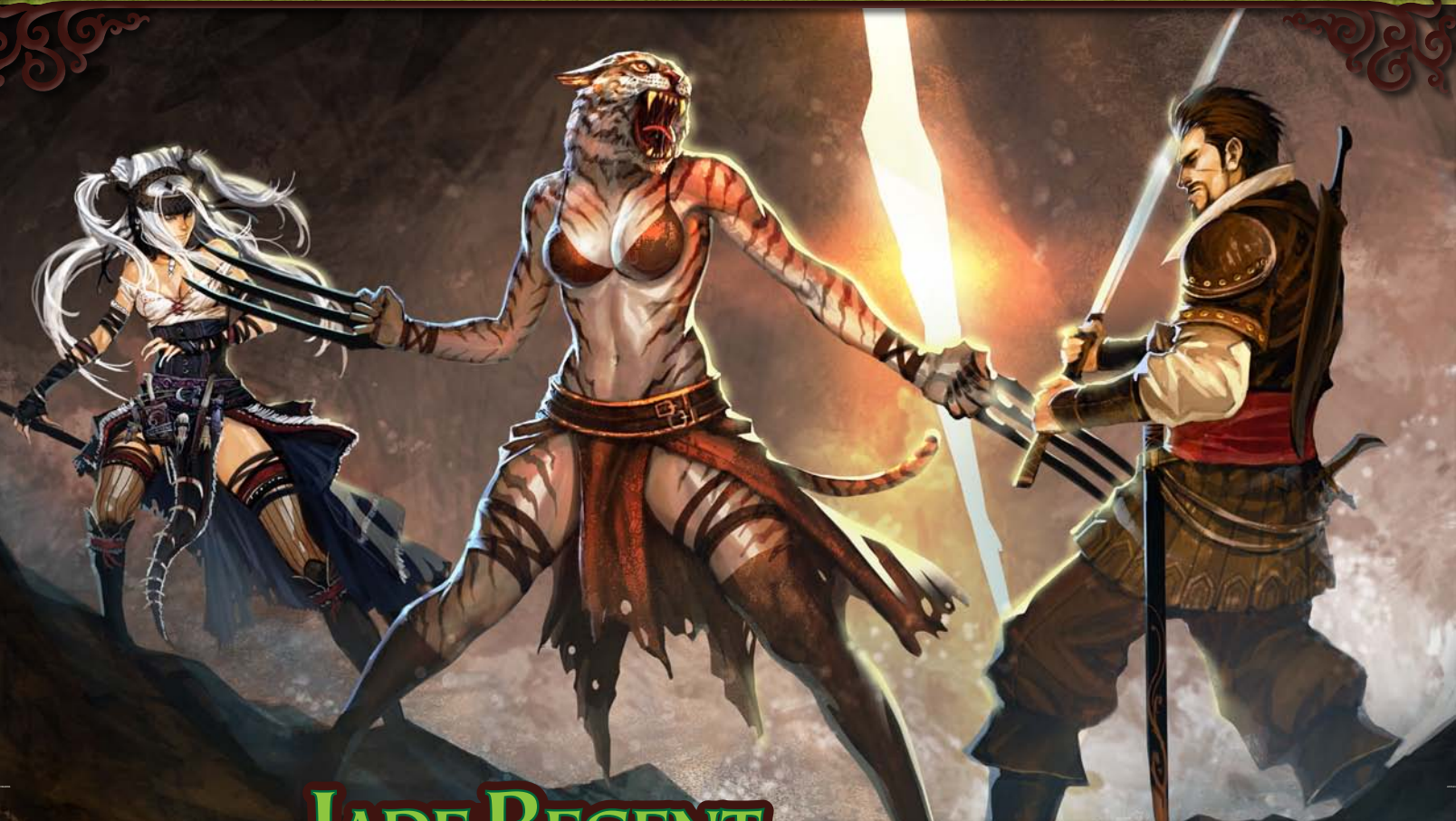


JADE REGENT



JADE REGENT

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

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

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

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Tide of Honor” uses the medium XP track.

12 The PCs begin this adventure at 12th level.

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART ONE: THE RONIN AND THE BANDITS

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

JADE REGENT

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

THE RONIN'S CAMP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



HABESUTA HATSUE

HABESUTA HATSUE CR 10

XP 9,600

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

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +12

Aura courage (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

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

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

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

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** disease, fear

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

At will—*detect evil*

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +3)

1st—*bless weapon, divine favor*

TACTICS

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

HIRABASHI JIRO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

HIRABASHI JIRO

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 115 (see page 52)

SEINARU HEIKIKO

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

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

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

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

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

SEINARU HEIKIKO FEATURES

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

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

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

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

THE BANDITS OF SEINARU HEIKIKO

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

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

JADE REGENT



TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

A1. MAIN GATE (CR 7)

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

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

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

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

VETERAN BANDITS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)

hp 67 each

TACTICS

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

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

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

A2. CONCEALED HOLLOW (CR 11)

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

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

VENGEFUL WOOD SPIRITS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

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

NE Large construct

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

DEFENSE

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

JADE REGENT

hp 96 each (12d10+30)
Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8
DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic
Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee 2 slams +18 (2d8+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks splintering (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 34

A3. COURTYARD (CR 12)

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

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

VENGEFUL WOOD SPIRITS (3) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 96 each (see page 13)

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

A4. OLD BATH (CR 12)

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

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

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

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

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

KAMUY-PARO CR 10

XP 9,600
 Male human druid of Lady Nanbyo 11
 NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +5; **Senses** Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural, +2 shield)
hp 97 (11d8+44)

TIDE OF HONOR

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

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

Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +15)

6th—*fire seeds*^D (DC 20), *greater dispel magic*

5th—*call lightning storm* (DC 19), *fire shield*^D (DC 19), *stoneskin*

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

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

2nd—*barkskin*, *flame blade*, *heat metal* (DC 16), *produce
 flame*^D, *warp wood* (DC 16), *wood shape*

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

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

D Domain spell; **Domain** Fire

TACTICS

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Druidic, Ignan, Minkaian, Terran, Tien

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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

TOS KATUN (HYBRID FORM)**CR 10**

XP 9,600

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

NE Large humanoid (human, shapechanger)

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

DEFENSE

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

hp 109 (10d10+50)

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

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

TACTICS

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

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

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

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

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

JADE REGENT

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

A5. GUARDROOMS (CR 5)

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

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

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

A6. LOOKOUT POSTS (CR 5)

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

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

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

A7. STABLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

A9. COMMON HALL (CR 12)

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

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

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

ILGAMAL

CR 10

XP 9,600

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

Init +3; Senses Perception +15

DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

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

TACTICS

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

Morale A loyal soldier, Ilgamal fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +9; CMB +12; CMD 25

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

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

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

VETERAN BANDITS (6)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)

hp 67 each

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

A10. CELLAR

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

A11. ARMORY

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

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

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



GANGASUM

A12. GANGASUM'S QUARTERS (CR 13)

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

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

GANGASUM	CR 12
XP 19,200	
Male human barbarian 13	
CE Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +4; Senses Perception +15	
DEFENSE	
AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, -2 rage, +3 shield)	
hp 168 (13d12+78)	
Fort +15, Ref +8, Will +8	
Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +4;	
DR 4/—	
OFFENSE	
Speed 40 ft.	
Melee +2 <i>scimitar</i> +22/+17/+12 (1d6+8/15-20)	
Ranged +2 <i>composite shortbow</i> +19/+14/+9 (1d6+5/x3)	
Special Attacks greater rage (32 rounds/day), rage powers (clear mind, guarded stance [+3 dodge vs. melee], increased damage reduction, mighty swing, no escape, powerful blow +4)	
TACTICS	
During Combat Gangasum fires arrows at opponents while his bodyguards engage them in melee combat. Once one of his bodyguards has fallen, Gangasum rages, activates his guarded stance rage ability, and enters combat himself.	
Morale Gangasum considers retreat an option only when he is fighting from horseback or from a distance. Once he has entered hand-to-hand combat, he fights to the death.	

TIDE OF HONOR

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

SQ fast movement

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

VETERAN BANDITS (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Raider (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 280)

hp 67 each

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

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

A13. FORLORN SHRINE

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

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

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

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

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

A14. DORMITORY

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

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

JADE REGENT

A15. STORAGE

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

CLAIMING THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

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

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

RAISING THE TIDE

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

PART TWO: THE SHADOWS OF ENGANOKA

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

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

WHAT ABOUT THE CARAVAN?

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

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

THE KUROI YANE MARKET

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

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

THE CRUELTY OF SIKUTSU SENNAKA (CR 12)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



DAIKAN TETSUKU

TIDE OF HONOR

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

DAIKAN TETSUKU (6) CR 7**XP 3,200 each**

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

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

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

DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

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

2 claws +14 (1d6+6)

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

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

3/day—*darkness*, *fly*

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

invisibility (self only)

TACTICS

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

MEETING THE THREE MONKEYS

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

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

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

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

A DEADLY STALKER (CR 14)

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

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

KAIBUNINSHO

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 86 (see page 54)

KAIBUNINSHO'S BRONZE COIN

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



SHINOBI FUHONSEN (FRONT)

SHINOBI FUHONSEN (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong illusion; **CL** 15th

Slot neck; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

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

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

DESTRUCTION

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

CONCLUDING THE MISSION

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

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

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

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

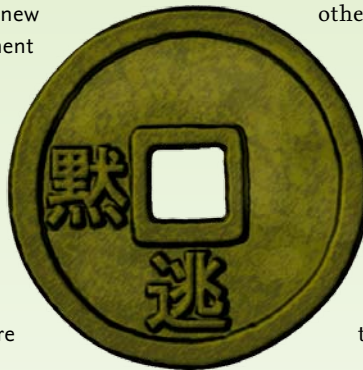
The ninja have their fair share of spies working in northwestern Minkai, and are willing to share their knowledge with the PCs, if the price is right. Any of the Three Monkeys can provide the following information, for 1,000 gp per question.

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

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

PART THREE: THE PEARLS OF SAKAKABE

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



SHINOBI FUHONSEN (BACK)

JADE REGENT

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

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

THE KINIRO KYOMAI TEAHOUSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



O-KOHAKU

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

O-HAKAMI'S CLUES

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

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

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

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

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

O-SAYUMI'S INRO

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

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

O-SAYUMI'S INRO



Player Handout

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

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

THE FATE OF O-SAYUMI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE SEARCH FOR O-SAYUMI

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

NAMIDAKAME LAGOON

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

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

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

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

B. THE WISE KAPPA

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

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



NUMATARO-SAMA

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

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

C. BARGE DOCK (CR 13)

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

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

BARGE CREW (8)**CR 7****XP 3,200 each**Ja noi fighter 2 (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #52 90*)

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

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural)**hp** 94 each (8d10+50); regeneration 3 (acid or fire)**Fort** +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4; +1 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 spear +17/+12 (1d8+13/19–20/x3)**Ranged** javelin +11 (1d6+8)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +7)3/day—*command* (DC 12), *doom* (DC 12), *fly*, *magic weapon*1/day—*bull's strength***TACTICS****Before Combat** The barge crew cast *bull's strength* and *magic weapon* on their spears.**During Combat** The ja noi gang up on foes, using *fly* if necessary for mobility in combat.**Morale** If more than half their number are slain, the remaining ja noi try to flee using Yugureda's barge.**Base Statistics** Without their spell-like abilities, the barge crew's statistics are **Melee** spear +14/+9 (1d8+9/19–20/x3);**Ranged** javelin +11 (1d6+6); **Str** 23; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27;**Skills** Climb +15, Swim +15**STATISTICS****Str** 27, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29**Feats** Athletic, Cleave, Improved Critical (spear), Improved Initiative, Lunge, Power Attack**Skills** Bluff +10, Climb +17, Disguise +10, Fly +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +11, Profession (sailor) +11, Stealth +12, Swim +17**Languages** Goblin, Minkaian, Tien**SQ** change shape (Small or Medium humanoid, *alter self*), serene fighter**Gear** masterwork studded leather, spear, javelins (3)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Serene Fighter (Su)** A ja noi is extremely disciplined and

JADE REGENT

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

D. VILLAGE OF THE PEARL DIVERS (CR 12)

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

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

PEARL DIVERS (6) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

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

CE Medium undead

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

DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

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

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

TACTICS

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

E. CAVE OF THE SEA DRAGONS (CR 12)

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

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

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

XP 9,600 each

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

hp 150 each

TACTICS

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

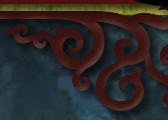
Morale If one of the dragon turtles is slain, the survivor fights to the death to avenge its mate.

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

SHINJU-NO-IE, THE HOUSE OF PEARLS

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

TIDE OF HONOR



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

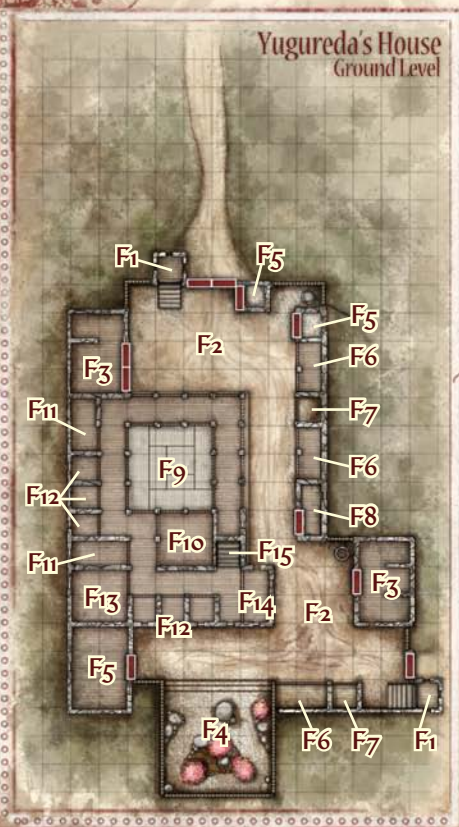
F10. Side Reception Room: This area is detailed below.

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

JADE REGENT

Shinju-no-Ie

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



Blandoll

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

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

F6. SERVANTS' ROOMS (CR 12)

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

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

YUGUREDA'S HOUSEKEEPERS (4) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

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

CE Medium undead

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

DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

Weaknesses light sensitivity, vulnerable to light blades

OFFENSE

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

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

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

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

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

TACTICS

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Abyssal, Minkaian, Tien

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

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

F9. MAIN RECEPTION ROOM (CR 12)

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DARK SHOJI-KA MASTERS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Greater shadow (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

hp 58 each

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

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

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

FIG. SIDE RECEPTION ROOM

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

SHINJU-NO-IE DUNGEON

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

G1. SAKE CELLAR

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

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

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

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

G2. SHADOW MAZE (CR 14)

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

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

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

Area **B2b**: Four tenebrous worms.

Area **B2c**: Four greater shadows.

DREAD WRAITHS (3) CR 7

Advanced giant wraith (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 281, 294, 295)
hp 67 each

GREATER SHADOWS (4) CR 8

hp 58 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 245)

SPECTRE CR 7

hp 52 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 256)

TENEBOUS WORMS (4) CR 8

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

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

SHADOW MIRROR TRAPS (8) CR 8

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

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

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

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

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

G3. LOUNGE (CR 12)

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

TOSAKAGE

CR 12

XP 19,200

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

NE Large magical beast

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

Perception +20

DEFENSE

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

OFFENSE

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

TACTICS

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

STATISTICS

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

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

G4. STUDY

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

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

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

G5. LABORATORY

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

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

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

G6. ROOM OF SHADOWS (CR 14)

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



YUGUREDA SHOSAITO

SHADOW SENTINELS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

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

YUGUREDA SHOSAITO

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human illusionist 14
NE Medium humanoid (human)

TIDE OF HONOR

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

DEFENSE

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

hp 108 (14d6+57)

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

DR 10/adamantine

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +7/+2 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +12 (1d4–1/19–20)

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

At will—shadow step* (420 feet/day)

8/day—binding darkness* (3 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 14th; concentration +19)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Focused School Shadow*; **Opposition Schools**

Enchantment, Transmutation

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

TACTICS

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

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

O-SAYUMI

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 75 (see page 56)

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

CONCLUDING THE MISSION

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

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

PART FOUR: THE HONOR OF SIKUTSU ITSURU

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

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

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

MEETING SIKUTSU ITSURU

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR



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

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

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

CLASH AT SHURYO ONSEN

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

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

JADE REGENT

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

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

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

SHURYO ONSEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J6. Guardrooms: This area is detailed below.

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

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

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

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

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

J14. Entrance Hall: This area is detailed below.

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

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

J17. Lounge: This area is detailed below.

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

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

J6. GUARDROOMS (CR 12)

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

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

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

SIKUTSU SAMURAI (4) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

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

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +10

DEFENSE

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

hp 90 each (9d10+36)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +4

Defensive Abilities greater resolve, resolve 5/day

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

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

mwk wakizashi* +14/+9 (1d6+4/18–20)

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

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

TACTICS

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



SIKUTSU SAMURAI

JADE REGENT

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tien

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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

J14. ENTRANCE HALL (CR 13)

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

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

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

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

TYPHOON GUARDS (6)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

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

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

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

DEFENSE

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

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

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

Defensive Abilities evasion; **SR** 16

Weaknesses susceptible to patterns

OFFENSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1/day—*blur*, *glitterdust* (DC 16)

TACTICS

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Minkaian, Tengu, Tien

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

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

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

J17. LOUNGE (CR 14)

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

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

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

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

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

KAZUO THE YOJIMBO

CR 11

XP 12,800

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

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

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

DEFENSE

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



KAZUO THE YOJIMBO

JADE REGENT

hp 140 (11d10+80); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

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

Melee mwk tetsubo* +18/+13/+8 (2d8+9/19–20/x4)

Ranged composite longbow +14/+9/+4 (2d6+6/x3)

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

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

Constant—fly

At will—darkness, invisibility

1/day—charm monster (DC 19), cone of cold (DC 20), deep slumber (DC 18), gaseous form

TACTICS

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

Morale Kazuo fights to the death in defense of Sennaka.

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

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 25, **Int** 14, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Exotic Weapon

Proficiency (tetsubo), Improved Critical (tetsubo),

Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (tetsubo)

Skills Bluff +19, Disguise +14, Fly +10, Intimidate +19,

Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10,

Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Giant, Minkaian, Tien

SQ armor training 1, change shape (Small, Medium, or Large humanoid; *alter self* or *giant form I*), flight

Other Gear Large masterwork tatami-do*, Large composite longbow (+6 Str) with 20 arrows, Large masterwork tetsubo*

*See *Ultimate Combat*.

SIKUTSU SENNAKA

CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 151 (see page 58)

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

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

CONCLUDING THE MISSION

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

PART FIVE: THE SIEGE OF SEINARU HEIKIKO

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

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

BATTLE FOR THE FORTRESS (CR 16)

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

TIDE OF HONOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Constant—fly

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

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

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

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

JADE REGENT

NPC RELATIONSHIPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

NOBUNOBU AND TOKIKOKITO (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

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

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

DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

OFFENSE

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

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

Ranged javelin +14 (1d8+7)

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

Special Attacks double weapon mastery, spellstrike

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

Constant—*see invisibility*

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

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

TACTICS

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

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

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

STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

Languages Giant, Minkaian, Orc, Tien

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

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

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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



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

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

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

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

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

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

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