

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>  
OFFICIAL GAME ADVENTURE

# Oriental Adventures

## Blood of the Yakuza

by David "Zeb" Cook



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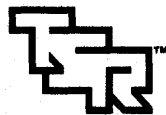
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# Introduction



*Blood of the Yakuza* is the fourth in the series of *Oriental Adventure* modules set in the world of Kara-Tur. Beginning in *Swords of the Daimyo* and continuing into *Night of the Seven Swords*, the player characters have roamed through the lands of Kozakura and then set sail upon the Celestial Sea for grim and mysterious islands in *Ochimo, the Spirit Warrior*. Now, returning from their sea voyage, they have come ashore in Wa at the city of Nakamaru.

*Blood of the Yakuza* is also the second *Oriental Adventures* campaign adventure module, the first being *Swords of the Daimyo*. In that module a complete province of Kozakura was mapped and detailed to use as the setting for player character adventures. In *Blood of the Yakuza*, you are presented with a populous, indeed crowded, seaport rife with intrigue, romance, and fell secrets. Your player characters can consort with the mighty and powerful or slink through darkened streets with those of questionable repute. Here your characters will find all the things to make their lives easier and all the perils to make their lives exciting.

The *Blood of the Yakuza* package contains two booklets, a mapsheet, and the charts found in the inside of the module folder. This 48-page booklet is the Background and Adventure Booklet. It contains a history of Wa,

background information on the city of Nakamaru and its districts, descriptions of the important factions within its walls, and several interconnected, interweaving plots ranging from political intrigue to monstrous attacks.

The second booklet contains listings of all the prominent NPCs the player characters are likely to encounter, along with relevant statistics for monsters and frequently encountered folk. These are arranged alphabetically by family or organization. The *Encounter Tables* are for use in creating random encounters while the player characters explore and adventure in the streets of Nakamaru.

The large mapsheet has an overview of the city of Nakamaru on one side. This shows the lay of the land, arrangement of streets, and locations of principal compounds. A number key is not given on the map, allowing you to show it directly to the players without revealing anything.

The inside of the module screen has the *Master Family Chart*. This shows the names and relationships of the different families of Nakamaru, so you can keep track of the varying allegiances and conflicts among those of the city.

## Life in Wa

Wa, like its neighbor Kozakura, is a fiercely independent island nation. In many ways the two have shared a common history and background. The language of each is the same, although each uses a different dialect (comprehension between the two is 65%). Both have similar institutions, although those of Wa are much more advanced. Kozakura and Wa even share similar ethical and religious attitudes, a factor which has greatly affected their daily life.

Historically, Wa is somewhat modelled after the early Tokugawa period of Japan — shortly after that nation had been truly unified under a single leader. A great age of warfare had just ended and tensions between the victorious shogun, his allies and his defeated opponents created a political climate filled with intrigue, plots and counter-plots.

The people of Wa are rather strictly divided into four groups — the merchants, the craftsmen, the farmers, and the lords. Each group supposedly has greater status than those below it. While this status is reflected in favorable treatment and special laws, it is not a true measure of the actual society.





## E t a

The lowest of all classes, so beneath all the others that they do not receive even the most basic of considerations, are the eta or outcasts. These poor souls are despised by all others, partially for their occupations and partially for their parentage. Children born of eta parents are automatically one of them. There is little they can do to change this. Eta traditionally take on the jobs of butchers, tanners, undertakers, and executioners. These tasks dealing with death and blood are traditionally considered unclean by all others.

Eta have only a few ways to escape their existence. They can join the *yakuza* and hope to better themselves or they can move to a distant province and begin a new life. On rare occasions they can rise to another class by money or skill.

## Merchants

Supposedly the lowest of the four "proper" classes are the merchants, whether they be rice merchants, lumbermen, silk merchants, or moneylenders. In this very agricultural society, the merchants neither grow crops nor make useful items. They buy and sell the products of others. However, since the unification of Wa, cities have been growing and the services of merchants to get the goods to the people have become more important.

As is natural with merchants, they have managed to amass money far beyond their social position. With their new wealth, they have been able in turn to make loans to others, particularly the *samurai* and *daimyo* (who need the money to maintain their way of life). This money has put the merchants in the confused position of being more powerful and necessary than their social position dictates.

Because of their wealth, the merchants must also be wary. Loans to samurai and daimyo are a risky busi-

ness, since they can always refuse to pay the poor merchant. When this happens, there is little that can be done. Protesting to a higher lord is risky, at best. At the same time, with their wealth, the merchants want to live like the nobles, which may also incur their anger. On rare occasions a merchant of wealth and power is granted the rights of a samurai in recognition of his power. However, this is the exception rather than the rule.

## Craftsmen

Craftsmen are those able to produce objects of usefulness and beauty. Common among them are carpenters, painters, weavers, dyers, stonemasons, potters, and woodcarvers. While supposedly the third of the four classes, an artisan's status is really determined by skill. A brilliant painter or woodcarver is more in demand and is thus given better treatment than a mediocre carpenter. Influential samurai and daimyo like to "collect" skilled craftsmen by supporting them with money and favors. The craftsman in turn is bound to the lord. This arrangement adds prestige to the lord and security to the craftsman, a suitable arrangement all around. Craftsmen, so valuable for what they do with their hands, are seldom elevated out of their class, but sometimes receive special favors as an encouragement to continue their brilliant works.

## Farmers

The structure of Wa is an agricultural society and the heart of this society is the farmer. Thus, of all the commoner classes, the simple farmer is one of the most respected. From his hands come the rice, fish, and vegetables needed for everyone else to survive. He is the base and foundation of the daimyo's rule and so must be treated with respect.

Still, the life of a farmer does not create the wealth of the merchant or

the spectacular beauty of the craftsman. It is a plain and drudging existence, working in the fields day after day. Still, because of his rank, the farmer can depend on the protection of his lord from bandits and the right of his headman to seek redress for grievances. It is not uncommon for a village headman to be granted the privileges of the samurai class in recognition of his importance to the social structure.

## Lords

At the top of the social ladder are the lords—samurai and daimyo. Of all the social classes, they have the most privileges and, perhaps, the most restrictions. The samurai (and their attendant bushi) are normally in the service of a single lord. This lord might be a samurai of greater status (who in turn would be in service to another) or a daimyo. In either case, the samurai typically is assigned a stipend in accordance with his rank. This stipend is essentially his pay. It is normally measured in *koku*. Thus, samurai do not grow crops or produce goods. Instead, they are expected to serve their lord in military matters—warfare and keeping the peace being the two most common.

Obviously, this system has flaws, since large numbers of samurai only serve to drain off money and produce nothing in return. In the old times of constant warfare, such men were necessary. Now, with peace, many a warrior finds himself idle. Idleness leads to boredom and boredom leads to trouble. It is not surprising that the greatest troubles are caused by these samurai, who have nothing productive to do. A few have slowly been moving into the merchant class, perhaps as innkeepers or traders, but it is an unhappy and shameful process. Virtually no samurai becomes a merchant by choice. Instead, he is forced into it by finances and circumstances.

# Timeline of Wa

The first date given for each event below is taken from the Wa calendar, which is measured from the time of the first emperor of the Goshukara line. Emperors preceding this date are only recorded by their era, name and year. For example, the marriage of Samon to the serpent was said to have occurred in the 23rd year of Kuni, during the reign of Emperor Nagazane. Dates given in parentheses are those that match events of timelines in OA1, OA2, or OA3. The calendar used is identified after the date.

*1st year of Chisho:* The Sacred Wand and the Moonlight Arrow, emblems of the imperial office, are given to the Emperor Kochi by the Spirit of Wa, allowing him to establish the claim to the entire island of Wa.

*412th year of Chisho:* The Emperor Kochi dies. The War of the Spirits begins. The spirit folk are divided in their loyalties and split into two factions. One faction sides with the spirits while the other supports the humans. The korobokuru attempt to remain neutral, but eventually join the spirits. The hengeyokai take great delight in the resulting turmoil and manage to fight for both sides with equal abandon. In the end, the unity of Wa is destroyed and the island divides into petty clans engaged in fairly constant warfare. The Age of Kochi, Master of the Peach Tree, becomes a romantic ideal, which foreverafter drives the nobles to attempt the impossible task of ruling the entire island.

*1st Year of Koyo:* Emperor Kasada regains the Moonlit Arrow from the Spirit of Yakamashi Mountain and claims control of all Wa. The southern korobokuru support the claim against their northern brothers. Kasada is recognized as the first emperor since Kochi but refuses to name the era after him for fear of evil omens.

*23rd year of Kuni:* The wandering shukenja Samon is forced to seek shelter at a simple peasant's hut during a raging blizzard. There he becomes entranced with the peasant's beautiful daughter, a girl of obvious grace and breeding. During that night he forgets his vows and woos the daughter. For three nights he continues the courtship until by custom it is decreed they are married upon the third night. But with the dawn he discovers a great serpent coiled by his side — the true form of his new bride. Maddened by horror and remorse, he flees into the mountains where his spirit is still sometimes seen.

1: When the Kasada line collapses for lack of an heir, the regency is established while the search is commenced for a suitable relative. The Goshukara line is finally chosen and the first emperor of the Goshukara is enthroned.

3: The regent Toda no Nagamori attempts to overthrow the Emperor so as not to lose his power in the court. The conspiracy is discovered and all the plotters are slain or captured. The regent's family clan is scattered. Unable by custom to execute his ex-regent, the Emperor orders his wu jen to devise the most terrible fate they can conceive. They create the Cell of Perpetuity, where Toda no Nagamori languishes to this day.

24 (856 Shou): An emissary of the King of the Western Lands (Shou Lung), Cham Ko Hag, arrives in Wa. He is brought before the Emperor Tsuba. Upon leaving he promises to return with gifts from the King of the Western Lands.

138 (970 Shou): The King of the Western Lands offends the Emperor of the Jade Throne Gokami when his emissaries demand the obeisance of all Wa. They brazenly suggest that the Emperor has encouraged the activity of the wako who have been preying on the Shou Lung coastline. Great Counselor of the

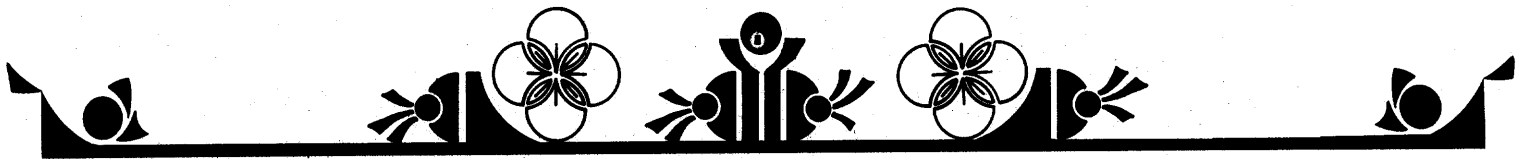
Middle Nobunaga orders all but one of the impudent emissaries executed. The sole survivor is refused any reply and sent back to Shou Lung. The chroniclers record this as the beginning of the Omi War.

140: Hearing reports that the King of the Western Lands is amassing a fleet, the Great Counselor of the Middle Nobunaga begins preparations for the defense of Wa. The master ninja Fukio is dispatched to Shou Lung to report and be ready to strike. The coastal cities are fortified and a grand program of castle building is begun. These activities all place huge demands on the Imperial Treasury, and Nobunaga in turn places more and more of the burden on the local chieftain (promising land and reward when the war is over).

141: Eye of the Law Kaian sees the Palace of the Sea Lord in the deeps off Komei Bay. There he instructs the Lord of the Ocean towards the Path of Enlightenment.

143 (975 Shou): The Omi War begins in earnest as the King of the Western Lands invades Wa with his fleet of 100,000 ships. The fortifications of Nobunaga are strongest across the central part of Wa and these areas resist the invasion. However, the daimyo of the north and south, angered at Nobunaga's heavy taxation, betray their garrisons to the invaders. Shou Lung soldiers begin to march overland on the capital. In the north, only Nakamaru remains uncaptured, due to the cunning of General Yoshibei. Shou Lung forces settle in for a long siege of the fortified manor that forms the city's main defense.

144 (976 Shou): The wu jen Kira and a confederation of sorcerers cunningly prepare a trap for the King of the Western Lands Chin, who is aboard his royal flagship. Through their spells they conceal a dangerous reef from all aboard. Driven



forward by a summoned storm, the flagship breaks up on the rocks. Before the Emperor Chin's wu jen can whisk him away to safety, the ninja Fukio, in disguise and aboard the ship for two years, strikes. The Emperor Chin is slain. Almost immediately the most powerful Shou Lung generals leave Wa to battle for the Shou Lung throne. The Shou Lung forces are plunged into leaderless confusion. Fukio disappears in the shipwreck. Some claim he is dead, while others say Kira rewarded him with prolonged life and great powers for his services.

144: General Yoshibei breaks the siege of Nakamaru and reconquers the province. The Shou Lung governor of the north offers a truce with Yoshibei. Cut off from land communication with the south, Yoshibei accepts the truce and sets himself up as Sengokudaimyo (warlord) of the province. For the next 100 years or so, the island of Wa is wracked by sporadic warfare. At first it is between the nobles of Wa and the Shou Lung governors. Although the nobles are able to drive the governors and their troops back, they never fully defeat them. The men of Shou Lung recruit new troops from the countryside and defend their lands. With time they adopt more and more of the ways of Wa, until they are almost indistinguishable from their subjects. By the time the Emperors of Shou Lung return, their governors owe more allegiance to the Emperor and daimyos of Wa than they do to the Emperor of Shou Lung.

240 (1072 Shou): Shou Lung forces return to Wa and begin the reconquest of the island. At first the new invaders attempt to command the old Shou Lung families still on the island. These families quickly discover that they lose power and importance under the new arrangement. Most refuse to coop-



erate and side with the various daimyo of Wa. Resistance is spirited but essentially futile. A century of warfare has destroyed the government of Wa, leaving the Emperor and the Great Ministers as little more than figureheads. Distrustful of and uncooperative with each other, the daimyo are easily broken by the organized forces of the invaders.

669 (1501 Shou): The Shou Lung are finally driven out of Wa by Nitta Shogoro, the Hidden Shogun. In the midst of the final battle, the Giants in Gray are seen watching the carnage. Shogoro proclaims this as a sign of doom for the Emperor Chin. After the victory, there is growing contention among the victors as Shogoro's sway over them weakens. By the end of the year the government has split into several factions.

670: Nitta Shogoro attempts to force the Empress Bishakammon to name him regent of Wa. His move

is thwarted when the Great Minister of the Left refuses to recognize him and declares his support for the Empress' youngest son. The capital is divided into two camps and violent skirmishing breaks into open warfare.

671 (1503 Shou): Emissaries from the Twelfth Emperor Chin of the Kao Dynasty arrive with a proclamation declaring Wa as fellow states of Shou Lung and further lifting the burden of tribute from the inhabitants of that land. Further proclamations grant citizenship to any person of Wa wishing to settle in Shou Lung, provided that person can demonstrate Shou Lung ancestry. Trade agreements are also reached allowing for open ports between the two lands. Nakamaru is named as one of these and the Empress allows the establishment of a small Shou Lung community there. It is carefully guarded and watched, as the governor, a descendant of Gen-



eral Yoshibei, does not want the return of Shou Lung occupation. The commander of the Grey Blossom regiment petitions the governor for permission to remain in Wa. He has little desire to return to Shou Lung as the commander of a defeated army. Many of his men also petition to remain. These requests are granted and the Grey Blossom mercenary regiment is founded. Initially it is in the service of the governor of Nakamaru.

1229 (984 Koz.): Hidegari legusa sails from Wa with a fleet of 1,000 ships. He lands on the southwestern tip of Shinkoku and immediately secures the provinces as a base of operations. Initial resistance to the invasion is thwarted when Hidegari persuades several daimyo of the area to join his army. The winter season forestalls further reinforcements from Wa and conquest stalls in the south. By the next spring, the Kozakurans have stabilized the front and no more progress can be made. legusa appoints the Nakori, Tokuma, and Tsuburaya families as governors of the conquered provinces. Raiding continues along the border for many years. Hidegari legusa returns to Wa.

1230 (995 Koz.): Hidegari legusa launches the Orchid Fleet, a combined force of ships from Wa and southern Shinkoku. His plan is to strike at the capital of Kozakura, but his fleet is intercepted at sea by Honda no Mototsune. During a fierce storm that Hidegari's sorcerers are unable to control, a bloody hand-to-hand battle is fought. His ship ablaze and his men dead or dying, Hidegari's ship disappears into a sudden fog. Thereafter, his gruesome ghost ship is said to be seen on occasion by sailors.

1231 (996 Koz.): The Kozakuran leader, Honda no Mototsune, reclaims the southern provinces of Shinkoku. After several months of war-

fare, the Nakori clan is forced to retreat to Wa. At the same time Shiro Tokuma deserts his command, a blot which hangs over his descendants for the centuries that follow. Likewise stained is the Shinkoku branch of the Tsurabaya who are forced to swear allegiance to Honda no Mototsune.

1358: Great Teacher Saizu (later known as Saizu the Immortal) appears over the capital standing on a cloud. Upon his landing spot is built a huge temple. Saizu begins his teachings of the Winter Sect of the Path of Enlightenment.

1572: The Tokiryō War is fought. Although only a short skirmish in this long period of warfare, it marks the beginning of the rise of the Matsuuri clan. By the end of the war, the Matsuuri and the Loyal Families have conquered the small provinces of the north. However, the various lords still do not cooperate towards further ends. The Matsuuri begin a slow effort to unite the north.

1624 (2456 Shou): Pirate activity in the Celestial Sea has become quite troublesome after several years of petty raiding. Approached by envoys of Shou Lung, the Shogun agrees to a joint expedition against the wako. The Shogun's contribution is limited since the wako are unofficially protected by Wa nobles. To appease the Fifth Emperor Chin of the Lui Dynasty the Shogun signs over several small islands in the sea south of Wa.

1647: The Matsuuri clan, having consolidated several of the smaller provinces of the north, is offered the opportunity to ally with the Makino clan, who are at this time the most powerful daimyo of Wa. The pact is sealed and under the generalship of Matsuuri Shogoro the process of unification is begun. The Matsuuri become the strong right arm of the Makino.

1661: Upon the instructions of Matsuuri Shogoro, Makino Mansaku

(the power of the Makino clan) is struck down by ninja. Matsuuri begins the Summer March on the capital. Upon reaching a plain outside of Tomo, the Matsuuri army is faced by a coalition of other daimyo. The battle goes badly for the Matsuuri and they are forced to retreat behind the defenses of Tomo. The enemy lays siege to the town.

1662: Matsuuri Shogoro manages to convince the daimyo of southern Wa to march on the lands of the central daimyo who are currently besieging him at Tomo. The enemy is distracted and weakened, enabling Shogoro to bring in reinforcements and break the siege. He spends the rest of the summer consolidating his position in the Tomo region.

1663: In the middle of winter, Matsuuri Shogoro makes the unprecedented move of beginning a campaign. Catching his enemies off-guard, he reaches the capital in force and demands his recognition as shogun. Armed with his official title, Shogoro persuades many daimyo to ally themselves with him. He faces his last major resistance at the battle of Shido Plain. Although there are several years of campaigns after this, Wa is officially considered under the rule of the new shogun.

1757 (2589 Shou): New contacts are made between the countries of Wa and Shou Lung.

1760: A bitter feud between Funada Toragi and Funada Kazuo erupts, reaching a bitter conclusion. Lord Kazuo contrives evidence that his brother is planning to support a nephew of the shogun in a coup. The shogun orders Toragi and several other lords executed and exiles his nephew to the Island of One Thousand Pines. The coup, while it had been discussed, was far from a reality at the time.

1777 (2607 Shou): The events of the module take place.

# The Politics of Wa

After centuries of chaotic warfare, occupation, and factional civil war, the islands of Wa have finally been unified into a single nation. This has not been an easy process.

The current ruler of Wa is the shogun, Matasuuri Nagahide. The shogun is a military position—something like the commander-in-chief of all the armies of the nation. Supposedly, the actual head of Wa is the Goshukara Emperor, aided by the ministers of his court. Once, long ago, this was the case, but those days have long passed. Now the most important and powerful thing the emperor can do is approve the appointment of the new shogun. Even in this he has no choice—the old shogun names his candidate and the emperor ceremoniously approves it. Still, the position of the emperor is honored and respected as the heart and true center of the nation. The wise shoguns of the past have carefully presented the emperor as above the everyday concerns of the world, leaving these in the shogun's capable hands. Weak shoguns have let authority slip through their fingers, either back to the emperor or into the control of others.

After the shogun and the emperor come the daimyo. A daimyo is a warlord, the ruler of a province or group of provinces. He is much more than a mere governor. For nearly all purposes, the province is his to rule as he sees fit.

The shogun has certain powers over the daimyo. It is his right to collect taxes from the daimyo, either in cash, goods, or labor. He could, for example, order a daimyo to build or repair a castle within his province or even at the capital (where it would be used by the shogun). He could likewise order a daimyo to contribute to the rebuilding of a temple. Indeed, these are tricks a crafty shogun uses to weaken daimyo who might threaten him, forcing them to spend their money on buildings. The shogun can demand the attendance of a daimyo at his court and normally requires the

daimyo's family to live in the capital as hostage. Refusing either of these requests is a sure sign of treason: Finally, the shogun can demand the daimyo surrender his lands, either to move to another province and rule or to be cast out altogether. Shoguns commonly order daimyo to trade provinces, partially to reward close followers, but mostly to prevent the daimyo from building strong alliances in any single area.

In general, the shogun tries not to impose too many laws on his daimyo, since this makes them restless and unhappy. His government also lacks the ability to administer a huge number of laws. As such, the shogun tends to issue sweeping edicts which others then elaborate on in detail. Examples of some of the edicts and the commentaries of others are listed below.

*Excessive drinking and wan ton behavior must be avoided at all times, as this is unbecoming and leads to the downfall of the state.* Commentary: For the state to remain strong, the warriors must remain always vigilant. Drunkenness, gambling and other vices cause daimyo to look weak in the eyes of the people.

*Those who break the law must not be harbored or given protection by anyone.* Commentary: Those who protect a criminal are criminals themselves and will receive the same punishment. If the murderer and his family are to be killed, then all of the village who shelter him will meet the same fate.

*No repairs on any castle or temple can be undertaken without the express permission of the shogun.* Commentary: For a lord to build his fortifications is a sign of warfare and rebellion, certain to create unrest against the shogun. Therefore, repairs can only be made with the shogun's permission.

*Any conspiracy against the shogun or another daimyo must be immediately reported.* Commentary: To conceal a plot is the same as concealing a

criminal and is worthy of the same punishment. Therefore, anyone who conceals the plottings of others must be a part of that plot.

*No daimyo will make improvements in his lands or recover new lands from the wilderness without the permission of the shogun.* Commentary: To make one's lands better than a neighbor's is to create discontent and strife. But to show one's lord your devotion and talent is a worthy thing. So should all improvements be reported to the shogun that he might bestow his reward and turn away from those who would speak badly of the lord.

*No person of common rank shall be allowed to ride in a palanquin.* Commentary: There are four classes of people in the land — merchant, craftsman, farmer, and lord. Each class must know its place and cannot presume upon the privileges of those greater than it. In only this way will harmony be preserved.

*No lord or great samurai shall be allowed to marry without the permission of the shogun.* Commentary: Marriage is the way of alliance and plotting. This causes unrest in the state. Therefore, the shogun will say who is allowed to marry whom.

*The family of a daimyo will reside in the city of the shogun.* Commentary: To prevent the daimyo from becoming unruly, their wives and children are required to remain hostage in the capital. In this way the safety of all the land is assured.



# The History of Nakamaru

The city of Nakamaru is located on the coast of the northernmost province of Wa. Originally the city was little more than a fortified outpost on the edge of the korobokuru lands. With the gradual retreat of the korobokuru into the mountains (where they still remain) the settlement of Nakamaru slowly expanded, gradually increasing in size and importance. Favored by a deep bay and prime forests, the village quickly became the shipping point for the fine lumber of the region, especially the majestic cryptomeria used in many palaces and temples throughout Wa.

However, Nakamaru remained by all standards a small and insignificant backwater for many centuries. While the town grew to a modest size, it was isolated from the rest of the country by rugged mountains, thick forests, inclement weather and hostile korobokuru. So distant from the capital and the Central Provinces, it became a common place to banish those who displeased the emperor, regent, or shogun. To be assigned a post in Nakamaru was the same as living death. Nakamaru has seen more than its share of treacherous ministers, grasping generals, separated lovers, over-popular princes, and wronged nobles. As a result, the city abounds with tales of failed heroes, tragic affairs, madnesses, duels, wasting diseases, and mysterious deaths.

It was not until the Omi war that

Nakamaru rose to any level of importance. The city and the surrounding land was one of few territories of the North to stand firm against the Shou Lung invaders and the turncoat daimyo. The city's defense was steered by the resourceful and loyal General Yoshibeï. Through tactics and clever strategems, he was able to maintain the independence of Nakamaru. He was also an ambitious man and, when the government of Wa collapsed, he unhesitatingly declared himself in independent warlord. Given his successes in battle, there were none able to counter this bold move. Shortly thereafter, the other lords followed his example and established themselves as sengoku-daimyo.

With the final collapse of the Shou Lung rule, Nakamaru gained another feature of importance—its foreign community. Through special dispensation of the Emperess Bishkammon, the city was instructed to maintain a quarter for the residences of foreign merchants and dignitaries. Principal of these was the Grey Blossom Regiment, formerly a unit of the Shou Lung army. With this highly disciplined troop Nakamaru has been able to discourage several attempts by neighboring lords to overrun its province. Indeed, the troop and its reputation have added to the desirability of the province.

Now, the past century has seen a substantial rise in Nakamaru's impor-

tance. The province of Nakamaru was the original home province of the Matasuuri family. From this distant and secure base, they slowly and quietly built their power, bringing the surrounding provinces under their sway. When the Seige of Tomo was finally broken, the Matasuuri assembled their power and began the Winter March which ended in victory on the Shido Plain. Since then, the province of Nakamaru has been awarded as a gift province to those greatly favored by the shogun. Indeed, it is a great honor to be assigned to the rule of Nakamaru, once the shogun's home province. Under this sponsorship, Nakamaru has grown into a thriving port city.

As it is very far to the north, Nakamaru has a greater range in its seasons than most other parts of Wa. The spring comes late to the area and is noted for the dense fogs which roll in from the sea. The summers are pleasant, neither too hot nor too cool and the region is spared much of the torrential rains which strike further south. This combined with the natural beauty of the countryside has encouraged many southern nobles to build summer estates around the city. The fall however is bleak, chill and wet with leaden, gray skies. The winters are much colder than the rest of the country with freezing nights and heavy snows.

# The Calendar of Nakamaru

Nakamaru is a vital, living city, filled with people who participate in myriad affairs. Throughout the entire year there are regular events—festivals, holy days, special observances and the like. These events are part of what makes up the life of any place, be it a small town or large city. The calendar below gives a listing of the regular, major activities that occur in Nakamaru, along with a brief description. These events can add a wealth of detail to the game.

The events listed can be used in many ways. Any occasion where there is celebration is a good opportunity for trysts, conspiratorial meetings, gossiping, introductions, and good old wheeling and dealing. Festivals are also a time when *shukenja* and *sohei* must make observances and take part in public rituals. They are also a time of skulduggery and villainy as the less upright of the community prey on the unsuspecting or over-indulgent. Finally, player characters will gain a sense of place and belonging as they become familiar with the cycles of the year.

*The New Year:* This festival begins on the first day of the year with the ritual visit to the local shrines and temples. Prayers are made for fortune and good health in the coming year. Streets and shops are brightly decorated. Friends exchange small gifts and special New Year's cakes are made. *Shukenja* and *sohei* have special observances to make for the first 12 days of the year.

*Middle of Tsou:* The Tsuyoi-nokami Shrine holds a nighttime procession through the streets known as the Lantern March. Young men carrying paper lanterns on long poles wind through the streets from the sea to the shrine. The march is usually boisterous and accompanied by much drinking.

*First of Ju:* The End of Winter festival takes place, although the weather of Nakamaru will be quite cold for some time yet. Families make a ritual visit to a shrine or temple and enjoy a feast meal.

*Middle of Ju:* The Snow Festival is observed by those with young children. Families build small snow houses in the garden with an altar at the center where the children say prayers on behalf of the family. The festival is usually accompanied by snowball fights and snow-viewing parties. The festival normally takes place on or near the first full moon of the month, depending on the snow conditions.

*First of Yu:* Young girls are honored in the Doll Festival. Each year girls are given elaborate dolls and special performances are held at the shrines. The dolls often become treasured items to be passed on from generation to generation.

*First of Kao:* The temples of the Path of Enlightenment celebrate the birthday of their great teacher. The day is marked by special prayers and a procession of the different *mikoshi* (portable shrines) of the temples, carried by *sohei* of the sect. Unfortunately, *sohei* of the different temples have been known to begin brawling and feuding when they meet in the street.

*First of Chu:* The citizens of Nakamaru celebrate the victory of General Yoshibeï over the Shou Lung forces. Outnumbered, he used papier maché figures to deceive the enemy as to his true numbers. Several months are spent in building elaborate papier maché floats, which are brilliantly lit by lanterns from the inside. All day the floats are on, display in different wards. The festival is capped by a midnight procession of brilliantly lit floats carried on the shoulders of the young men of the city. The festival has become a grueling battle of endurance between different factions of the city. Each carries a different float and batters its way along the course, attempting to harm all others as much as possible. Furthermore, the carriers are traditionally plied with sake to the point where they can barely stagger the last few blocks. At the end of the procession, the great constructions are set ablaze. More than once the city has suffered from serious fires because of this.

*Seventh of Hsiang:* This day is known as the Lover's Festival and is marked by romantic liaisons and small intimate parties under the night sky. It recalls the tale of two lovers separated for every day of the year but this one. Symbolic of this are two stars in the sky united to each other on this night by the bridge of the Milky Way.

*First of Chuang:* On the first day of the festival of the dead, special celebrations are made for the new harvest. A large banquet of fish and sweet rice cakes is prepared and offerings of food are made to the gods and ancestors of the family. The temples hold special religious dances which the nobles attend.

*First Five Days of Chuang:* This long running festival is held in honor of the dead. During this time special meals are prepared, tombs are visited, and prayers

are said requesting aid and blessing of ancestors. During this time unwholesome spirits are particularly active.

*Sixth of Chuang:* The festival of the dead is ended by a separate and distinct event, the Procession of the Lanterns. On the night of the sixth day, the young men of the shrines march in a procession, each group beginning at its own grounds and converging on the sea. Each man carries a pole festooned with lit lanterns and each temple vies to have its strongest youth carry the most lanterns on a single pole. It is normal for up to 50 lanterns to be carried by one man. Upon reaching the sea, an elder *shukenja* of the shrine says prayers over the group and sets the lanterns afire. Blazing, the poles are hurled into the sea. This is said to carry the prayers of the townsfolk to those who have died at sea. Bad omens from this festival predict poor fishing and ill luck on the ocean for the next year.

*Ninth of Hsuan:* The quiet and contemplative Chrysanthemum Festival is held to observe the blossoms and remember friends who are absent. Friends make pilgrimages to the peaks of nearby mountains and raise a glass of chrysanthemum wine to their dear friends. People normally wear a sprig of holly in their belts or hair on this day.

*End of Yang:* The end of this month (also known as the Godless Month) is celebrated for the return of the deities to their proper shrines and temples after having spent the entire month at the Celestial Court. The temples and shrines are ceremonially cleaned to greet the deities and banquets are typically served.

*Middle of Ku:* The young children of Nakamaru are taken by their parents to a shrine in the city. Afterwards there is a special meal for the family. The festival is a somewhat solemn and serious affair as the parents pray their children will behave themselves correctly and properly.

# The Districts of Nakamaru

The city of Nakamaru is a typical fortified port and samurai castle town of the period. At the center of the city is the castle with its mansions and fortifications. Extending outward from this are the different districts of the town. Each district is identified by name, according to a main feature of that area. Unlike western cities, each district in Nakamaru is a separate area made up of several wards. What makes the greatest difference is that each of these wards is walled-off from all the others and patrolled by armed samurai police. Movement of the common folk between each ward is carefully watched. These draconian measures are not so much to prevent crime but to prevent any chance of a popular uprising on the part of the common folk. After centuries of turmoil and rebellion, the shogunate and the daimyo no longer take any chances.

## Castle District

Perched on a swelling rise, barely higher than the surrounding plain, is the jet black Crow Castle, so named for its darkly painted walls. The gloomy tower juts over the twisting mossy gray stone walls and red-tile *tamon*. Far behind the heavy gates live the lords and rulers of Nakamaru, separate and distant from the hustle-bustle of the common folk. Cool gardens and lavish palaces share the crowded castle grounds with the ominous barracks of the daimyo's soldiers.

The castle is a *hirayamajiro* — a castle built on a hill in the middle of the plain. From here the daimyo of Nakamaru is able to observe and control the surrounding area. The main castle is normally empty, only occupied in times of siege, the nobles and samurai preferring to live in their mansions at its base.

## Samurai District

Spreading from the base of Crow Cas-

tle are the twisting streets of Nakamaru. The few broad avenues veer and turn at sudden angles, always under observation from the top floors of the *tenshu* (castle donjon). Spreading from these avenues like cracks in porcelain glaze, the narrow side streets twist and wander through the neighborhoods. The impassive building fronts press up on either side, the textures only broken by the plastered and tiled walls of the samurai mansions. There are few shops or storefronts here, because the district is reserved for the retainers of the daimyo.

The main buildings of this district are the walled compounds of the samurai. Within each compound are the mansions, barracks, stables, and gardens of the samurai owner. Living within the compound are the master, his family, his samurai retainers and the servants. The master of such a compound is himself a powerful samurai in the service of the daimyo (and thus the shogun). In general, this district is tightly patrolled and commoners do not wander its streets except on specific business.

The compounds are carefully controlled by a complex series of laws and regulations. Based on the power and wealth of the samurai, these laws dictate ownership, location, and size of the compounds, the heights of the buildings, the number of guards allowed, and even the style of gate that must be used. The greater the number or more lavish the structure, the more powerful is the lord within.

The few merchants and craftsmen allowed to live in this district are those especially favored by the daimyo. There are several ways to earn this permission. Commoner families which have provided supremely heroic service can be elevated to this position. More commonly, the family provides some service invaluable to the daimyo—painters, sculptors, and engineers are often favored this way. Nor is it impossible to buy your way in, especially if you are a rich merchant

who has loaned a great deal of money to the samurai families.

Player characters who are samurai can begin this campaign in one of two ways. If they have already played in several adventures and have a background, they could have been sent to Nakamaru by the shogun to enter the service of the daimyo. Depending on birth, level, wealth, and power, characters will either become the master of a compound and in direct service of the daimyo or will be a lesser samurai in the service of a retainer of the daimyo. If the character is newly created, he can be a samurai serving the master of one of the major compounds.

## Market District

Outside the ring of samurai compounds the streets become even more narrow and twisted. Wandering through the streets and back alleys, one enters the living heart of Nakamaru. For here are the markets, shops, trades and craftsmen that supply all the needs of the city, keeping it fed and clothed. One- and two-story buildings packed tightly together, the wooden walls and lattices hide tiny gardens and homes of the commoners. The streets are brightly decorated with colored banners proclaiming the nature of the business.

During the day there is a constant hustle of workmen—old women making deliveries of produce, fishermen carrying their wares to market, serving girls buying vegetables for their masters, ox carts hauling lumber through the streets, roofers hammering down new shingles, giggling courtesans admiring the young men, and breathless messengers darting through the traffic. And amid all this thronging activity come the haughty processions of the nobles, beating aside those too slow to move out of the way. On rare occasions there is the spice of a bloody duel fought in the streets when a samurai seeking



vengeance finds his enemy, or rival yakuza gangs meet.

Built on the main streets are the major temples and shrines of Nakamaru. Like the samurai district, these are large walled compounds filled with imposing buildings and cool gardens. Some are open to the public for worship. Others are closed to the common rabble except on all but the most holy of days. The most favored and important of these temples are located near the samurai district on the largest thoroughfare of the city.

## Pleasure District

Wedged in close between the samurai district and the market district is this small area noted for its entertainment, licit and illicit. Run-down, dank, and sleepy during the day, the district blooms during the night. Gay lanterns and brilliantly painted curtains promise enticements within each establishment. The streets fill with people from every station of life — drunken revelers, disguised nobles, belligerent samurai, predatory thugs, strolling musicians, curious foreigners, and bedecked courtesans. The streets crowd with lantern boys, umbrella bearers, scowling bodyguards, tattooed yakuza, watchmen, beggars, and actors. The clothing is resplendent and garish, the laughter loud, and the offense quick.

Here you can find nearly any activity you desire. There are drinking houses, dining houses with exotic menus, gambling dens, theaters, geisha houses, tea stalls, and other businesses catering to all tastes. The pleasure district is noted for its dangerous living and, indeed, this is part of what makes it so appealing to the wealthy of Nakamaru. Here you can disappear for an evening, forgetting your identity and station. Here is the chance to live a moment of your life away from the laws and restrictions of the samurai world. Here samurai mingle with commoners and proper deco-

rum is sometimes forgotten.

## Shipyard

Its narrow streets hidden by the thick woods of the cold north, Nakamaru has become a center of lumber production. As a matter of course, a thriving port and shipyard have grown in Nakamaru. The carpenters of the city, combined with the strong wood brought from the mountains, have made Nakamaru ships famous throughout Wa. During the spring and summer months, there is at least one ship being built in the yards. During the height of the season, teams of carpenters work nearly around the clock, by the light of the sun and the blaze of torches. The shipyard is a major source of income for the daimyo and thus he guards it strongly with a permanently assigned unit of soldiers under the command of a loyal samurai retainer.

The shipyard is also a foul and loathsome place, the site of dark deeds and sinister dealings. During the day the rising and falling tide can transform it from a pleasant lagoon to a sodden brown mud-flat. It is a part of town the wealthy or powerful will visit only with good reason and they will certainly never come here to be amused. It is a common place for secret meetings and conspiratorial plots. Those who live here have an understanding they know better than to interfere with dark figures in the night.

## Foreign Quarter

A grim and carefully patrolled palisade delineates the boundaries of the foreign district of Nakamaru. It is a sight shared with only a few other cities of Wa—a special compound for quartering the merchants, traders, navigators, scholars, and diplomats of foreign lands. Ever since the nobles of Wa overthrew their hated Shou Lung oppressors, the presence of barbari-

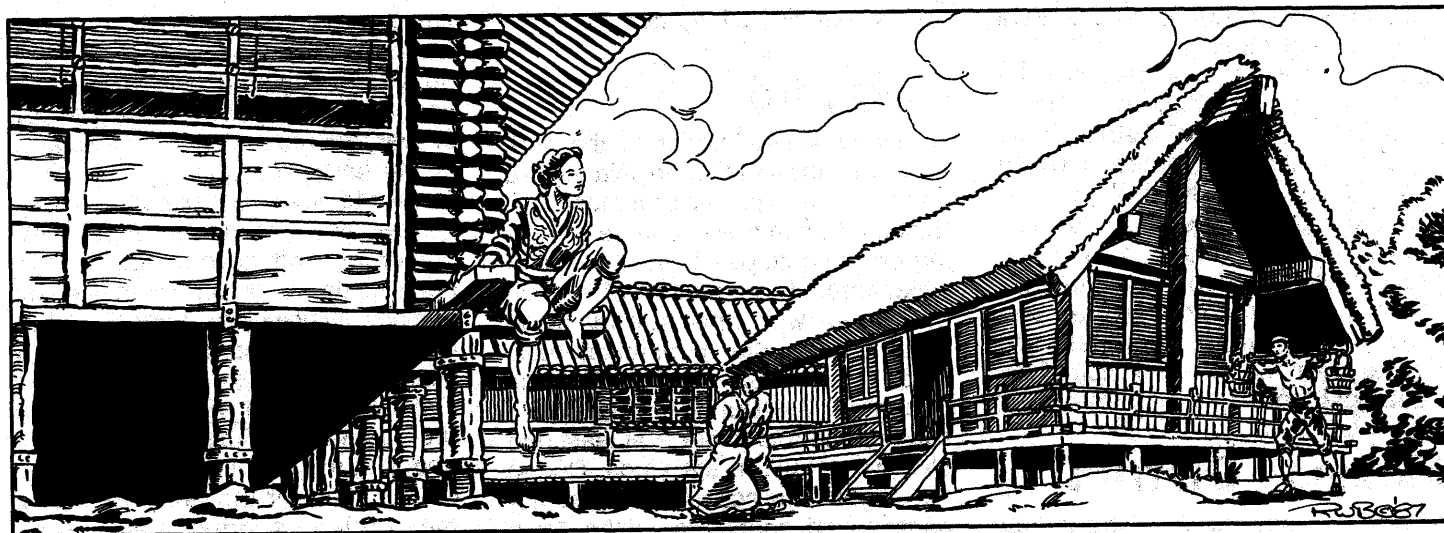
ans upon the shores of their fair island has been an emotional thing. No one on Wa has forgotten the humiliation of conquest. It is burned into the memory of every warrior and noble and scholar of the land. The memory fires their resolve to never let it happen again.

Now, with the power, of the law, numerous and severe edicts have been made to control the movement and activity of all foreigners. Still, they cannot be ignored or denied. Many possess valuable skills in the arts and crafts. Others bring new learning from the mainland. Traders bring rare goods unavailable in the island empire. And for the few great lords, the foreigners bring mercenaries whose loyalties can be easily ensured for a little coin and a few honeyed words.

Inside the walls of the compound, the buildings are much like those found in the samurai district—for most of the foreign visitors have the means to maintain themselves in high style. During the day the streets of the district are busy with merchants, sailors, servants and dignitaries of many lands—Kozakura, Shou Lung, T'u Lung, Koryo (a cold land of the north), and even barbarians from distant places across the eastern ocean. At night, the streets are all but deserted. The local help leave the district before the fall of night. The law and regulations include a strict curfew on barbarians. It is very strict—the punishment is death by slow execution. Only those with special passes or escorted by the samurai of a powerful noble dare break this curfew. The few who risk the curfew are surely about on the most insidious of business.

Players can choose to use characters who are strangers to Wa. Established characters from a Kozakura campaign will find it easiest to circulate among the people of Wa. The language is nearly identical (65% comprehension), the differences in accent explainable as being from a different province. The styles of dress and behavior are almost the same. At





worst, characters from Kozakura are backward or provincial when compared to the cultured lords of Wa. Characters from Shou Lung will find themselves the objects of constant suspicion, if not scrutiny,

Unless characters are able to demonstrate some highly useful skill or befriend someone powerful in the local government, they will find it difficult (but not impossible) to move freely through the city. Shou Lung player characters should be advised to exercise caution in all dealings with the people of Wa.

Player characters can also come from other lands, places much more distant than across the Celestial Sea. These can be barbarians from the nomad lands or even strange men from across the Eastern Ocean. In either case, the character will be treated as a true oddity. If the player character is bright and quick, he can

parley himself into a minor sensation, the darling of the powerful. Likewise, player characters with unique knowledge or unknown spells (such as magic user or clerical spells) can become the special "property" of a powerful samurai, his ace in the hole. Player characters in this situation will undoubtedly be treated well, provided they do not step across an unwritten line. The samurai will, after all, always consider the player character his to do with as he pleases, giving him away or even sending him to certain death if he must. Of course, if the player character fails to demonstrate any great worth or value, his fate will be far less romantic. Deemed less than worthless, they are consigned to the fate of the eta—that class of outcasts below even the most common of the peasant folk. Among the eta they would spend the rest of their lives.

## Eta Community

Outside the city of Nakamaru is a small and squalid group of huts, the homes of the eta. To the eyes of, all others in Wa, the eta are almost less than people. They are the outcasts. It is their lot to do the work unfit or unclean for others—butchering, tanning, grubbing in filthy places. Among them live Korobokuru and from their ranks the yakuza find ready recruits. The good people will not eat with them, let their children marry them, or associate with them if at all possible.

The eta village is little more than a collection of wood and thatch huts clustered around the road junction. There the people make what living they can, while trying to avoid the notice of those more powerful than they. Only an occasional shukenja and the yakuza show them any kindness or mercy.

# The Architecture of Nakamaru

The buildings of Nakamaru, like nearly all the buildings of Wa (and Kozakura), have a group of common features, whether it is a peasant's *minka* or the *tenshu* of a daimyo's castle. By studying this section, you will be able to create more realistic descriptions of the buildings you need.

The first thing most buildings have in common are the building materials. On an island given to earthquakes and as rugged as Wa, buildings of quarried stone are impractical and unsound. Stone has no flex and is easily shattered by violent quakes. Instead, the most common materials are wood, whether it be bamboo, pine, cryptomeria, willow, or some exotic tree; paper, from very heavy to translucent; straw, for matting and thatch; plaster, to fire-proof walls; and clay, to strengthen walls and fire into roof tiles. Stone is reserved for important buildings—the defensive walls of castles, the foundations of temples and towers.

Second, nearly all buildings share common construction features. The floors are generally built on raised posts. This helps keep the building dry in the rainy season, allows cool air to circulate underneath when it is hot, and discourages most vermin (rats, mice, and snakes) from entering the building. The walls of these buildings are thin and do not support the weight of the roof (which is often quite large). Instead, carved support pillars and crossbeams hold up the roof. This allows many of the walls to be moveable, sliding or entirely removable. Owners can reshape the interiors of their houses depending on need.

Equally noticeable is the roof. This is almost always built along a single ridge-pole, rising to a high peak in the center and sweeping down into huge overhanging eaves. The roofs of Nakamaru are tiled whenever possible (to reduce fire hazard), but wooden shingles, thatch, and reeds are also used. The eaves generally extend three feet or more beyond the line of the house, allowing for broad sheltered verandas to be built around

the outside the building. In this way rain water and snow are carried away from the insides of the house. Most houses have wooden shutters, extending from floor to ceiling, that can be fitted under these eaves during times of storm. Some have hinged shutters that swing up into the rafters when not in use.

Inside, ceilings are often not built and the crosswork of rafters that support the roof is exposed. Indeed, walls do not always reach to the top. (You may wish to consider this if, for example, your player characters were attacked by a group of ninja. Attacking from the maze of rafters above can be a very exciting and successful strategem.)

Harder to express than mere building details is the simple sense of style found in most buildings. Ornamentation is very simple and unobtrusive as a rule. Natural colors are favored, although brass and gilt are used by those who can afford it. For most people there is a deliberate attempt to make the building harmonize with the natural surroundings as much as possible. To help achieve this harmony, buildings are laid out according to specific proportions and arrangements. There is normally a central room or area around which all else is built. The proportions are normally on the order of two units of length on two sides to three units on the other two. Obviously, these proportions are not absolute and there are many variations, especially in the homes of commoners. However, in the houses of samurai and nobles the rules of dimensions and proportions become more and more rigid, since each change reflects a change in the status of the owner.

There is a final group of common features found throughout the city, one which is not a building detail. Tucked away on many a street or in the corner of a market are small shrines, notice boards, fire towers and watchmen's posts. The shrines, tended by the neighbors, are almost like tiny huts. It is normal for offerings of incense or sake

to be placed at their entrances (something many a destitute ruffian has greatly appreciated). The noticeboards are roofed to protect from rain and are plastered by many official pronouncements. With so many wooded buildings, fire is a great hazard and every district has its fire company (led by a samurai) and fire towers. These spidery scaffolds of lashed bamboo rise above the surrounding sea of roofs, providing firemen with a vantage point to watch for danger. The watchmen's towers are of wood and plaster, with shingled roofs, and can hold four men at a time.

The homes of the commoners have little more to add. The simplest type is the *minka* or farmhouse. These are not common to Nakamaru, found mostly on the outskirts. They normally feature high-ridged roofs of heavy thatch or reeds and simple earth and wood floors. More often found in Nakamaru are the simple row houses of the city dwellers. At their poorest, they are little more than wooden huts. The floors are earthen and there are one or two rooms at best. Each home is separated from the others by a thin wooden wall. The entrances and interiors are screened by *noren* (curtains). The roofs are simple planks. The front of each house is used for business—selling, craft work, etc.

The streets are narrow and often crowded with stalls. For those with a little more wealth, the row houses become larger and slightly better fitted. Though still small, the houses are divided into two halves. On one half is a door opening to an earthen-floored area and the other has a separate room with a raised floor and window overlooking the street. One or two rooms behind these are also floored. The outer walls, of woven willow and *noren*, again screen the entrance. The roofs are planked, reinforced by logs.

The modest, well-to-do commoners have houses quite similar to this, still built in long rows. There are more rooms and often a small garden is attached where vegetables and, perhaps, a few trees grow. The outer



walls are wattle and plaster, making them more fireproof. Businesses are run from the front room or out the front windows, which often have hinged shutters that can serve as tables. Highly successful merchants and innkeepers have small compounds with elaborate minka of two or three floors, a small gate entrance, a stable, and separate storehouses. These buildings are well-crafted and built of good materials, but are not elaborately decorated, since this is forbidden by law.

Samurai, homes become much more elaborate. Each household is organized around a compound where the master, his servants and his samurai retainers and their servants live. For a low level samurai, this would be little more than his own family and his servants. Beyond the small gate is a courtyard and the entrance to the main house. To the side or rear of the house is a garden (for pleasure, not growing vegetables).

Retainers of the samurai are housed in *nagaya*, or long house (a type of barracks), one or two stories high. Servants of the retainers would have the lower floor while the samurai retainers lived on the second. These *nagaya* normally lined the outer walls of the compound. If the samurai was powerful enough to have retainers who in turn had retainers, those closer in allegiance to the lord would be housed in separate buildings, screened from the sights by additional walls or stands of bushes and trees. Ultimately, a great samurai lord would have a compound filled with several mansions for himself and his most important retainers.

The mansion itself is organized according to formal customs. Upon passing through the gate, a visitor enters a small courtyard separated from the rest of the grounds. The entrance to the house is by the carriage approach or *kurumayose*, a roofed entryway which leads to the *genkan* or entry alcove. Guests are received in the *shoin*, an audience hall. Depending on the wealth and

power of the samurai, this is an arrangement of one, two, or three rectangular rooms arranged in a long row from east to west. If there is more than one room, each succeeding one is a step higher than the last.

The master or the most important person present sits at the far end of the last room on a low dais (*jodan*). Behind him lies a recessed alcove (*tokonoma*) much like a low shelf, frequently decorated with a large picture and a set of staggered shelves (*chigaidana*). On one side, the walls can be slid away along the length of the hall to reveal a view of the garden or even a small stage. On the other side, near the *jodan*, stand a pair of elaborately decorated doors (*chodaigamae*). Behind these lies a small dressing room for receiving visitors. This room also serves as a convenient place to conceal bodyguards, available at a moment's notice. From here other doors lead to the rest of the house.

The *shoin* is used for nearly all meetings and receptions and the very traditional rules of its design reflect the careful etiquette practiced by samurai. Indeed, even the poorest samurai master attempts to maintain a simple *shoin*; the powerful commonly have more than one. One is used for official receptions, being large and lavishly decorated. Smaller ones are used for more personal and equal meetings and tend to be much simpler in decoration.

In addition to the *shoin*, which is sometimes a separate building from the rest of the house, the remainder of the compound has what rooms and buildings the samurai can afford. Principal of these are the tea garden and the tea house. In contrast to the *shoin*, which is designed to be grand and elaborate, the tea house is a simple, quite rustic, little building. But there is nothing simple about these *soan* (grass cottages). Their design is carefully planned for artistic effect. The *soan* are quite small, almost tiny in size. Generally only two or three people are inside at a time, although the walls can be moved to

accommodate more. The furnishings are sparse—with only mats on the floor and the utensils necessary to make and serve tea. A small hearth is set in one corner of the floor. Latticed windows provide light, the paper protected from the outside by wood frames. Guests enter the *soan* through a small door, so low they must crawl. Everything within the *soan* is designed to remind the participants of their own humility.

Accompanying the *soan* is the tea garden. Ideally, the *soan* is set in the garden just out of sight of all else and reaching the teahouse requires a cooling walk along the paths. The designs of *soan* and gardens are points of pride and envy among the upper classes. Masters of such designs are eagerly sought after and their efforts are well-rewarded.

Very different from the homes of the samurai are the buildings of the shrines and temples. Both range in size from small neighborhood structures and roadside stops to large compounds filled with imposing buildings. In general, the shrines follow simpler building styles with less ornamentation than those of the temples.

Neighborhood shrines are small and modest affairs. Normally nestled amid a grove of trees, they can be quickly identified by the red archway (*torii*) that leads to the shrine. These shrines are not protected by walls or guards, since they are used by the people of the local neighborhood. Beyond the *torii* are the statues of guardian spirits, set to ward off evil influences. Inside the grounds is a stone basin filled with fresh water, for purification before prayer. Across from this might be a small covered stage for performing sacred dances. In addition to the shrine building itself, there might also be a storehouse for keeping sacred wine, salt, and a portable shrine.

Shrines are made from wood and thatch. No stone, plaster, or tiles are used in the buildings. The roofs are thatched and are steeply pitched. The floors are set on posts 3 to 4 feet



above the ground. Inside one normally finds a single hall, decorated very simply. There are no statues or representations of the deity to be seen in the shrine itself. The shrine is the center of the local community. It is not unusual to find the old men or the young children here passing the time in talk and play.

Temples, where money allows, are usually much more imposing structures. Most are a collection of buildings, centered around a single great hall. Built on a large stone foundation, this hall is reached by a flight of broad steps. Inside are huge statues of the deity or deities worshipped at that temple. These are often in arrangements of three—each a different representation of the same deity or complementary deities grouped together. Although such halls look to be two or more stories tall from the outside, they seldom have more than one floor, the inside having grand pillars and lofty ceilings. Since the hall is used for a number of different purposes—sermons, instruction, ceremonies, and daily prayer—the spaces between the pillars are designed to be closed off by portable screens and sliding *shoji* walls.

In addition to the main hall, a temple compound will have several other buildings. To the right and left of the main hall are the drum and bell towers and in the center will be a huge incense burner for offerings. Other buildings include imposing gatehouses with huge iron-clad gates, pagodas with five, seven or thirteen stories, quarters for the priests and monks, a library building for the holy sutras, and a smaller lecture hall, mainly used for the instruction of the clergy. A well-established temple will also have a separate mansion for its abbot, quarters for the *sohei* and one or more gardens and soan.

The castle of Nakamaru is truly different from the other buildings of the city. First, it is much more impressive and imposing than any other building in the town. It is built on the slopes and

top of the highest hill in the city. Fishermen at the dock and farmers in their fields can see the main tower rising over all the other roofs of the city. Secondly, it is designed not only for show, but for defense. Although the lord of Nakamaru does not live inside the castle itself (his mansion is on its grounds), he will quickly retreat to it in case of siege.

The castle's features broad eaves and wooden construction—have been changed to better protect defenders. The wooden walls have been heavily plastered, covered several layers thick. Unlike most castles, whose walls are normally whitewashed, the walls here have been covered with black paint, creating a striking effect. The broad eaves have concealed trapdoors, used during a siege to toss down stones (*ishiotoshi*), boiling water, and other deterrents atop an enemy.

The castle also uses a great deal of stone, far more than in any ordinary building. The main donjon or *tenshu-kaku* rests on a massive base of stone 35' high and approximately 130' square at the bottom. Surrounding the *tenshu-kaku* are several sets of walls and gates. These too are built on solid stone foundations.

The actual defenses of the castle begin well away from the hill where the main buildings are located. The first line of castle defense are the ramparts that run through the center of the city. These earthworks are set behind a broad moat and divide the samurai district from the rest of the city. Past this, down streets filled with sudden twists and bends is the second line of defense, the outer wall. Inside this wall are the mansions of the more important samurai. The wall is pierced by several stout gates, each manned by its own troop of soldiers. Beyond this, at the base of the hill, is a combination moat and wall. Wooden bridges span this moat at three points, passing through iron clad gates. Inside are the different courtyards of the castle. These are filled with the mansions of the most powerful (and

trusted!) retainers of the daimyo. Each courtyard is separated from the others by stone and plastered walls and occasional moats. Complex gates allow entrance from one bailey to the next. Each courtyard rises higher up the hill than the last.

From this point on, the route of any attacker is forced into certain paths. First, he must pass through ironclad gates while being hailed by arrows, stones, boiling water, and hot oil from the gatehouse above. Beyond this is a small courtyard with another gate on the right side. All the time they are vulnerable to the archers firing through the loopholes of the walls above. Once through both gates, the attacker must charge up a narrow roadway, switchbacking several times and all the while under attack from archers firing from behind loopholes. At the end of this road way is another set of gates similar to the first and farther beyond is another deadly path. All this ends in a small ironclad gate that opens into the main courtyard. But even from here to reach the main entrance of the *tenshu-kaku*, the attackers must pass through more gates while under constant fire from the defenders. It is no wonder that attackers by far preferred to surround and starve a castle into surrender than risk a direct assault!

The *tenshu-kaku* itself is four stories tall and 120' feet square on the first floor. The top floor of the tower is 55' feet above the first floor and 90' above the ground. Within the tower are armories, granaries, storerooms, a well, and council chambers. In times of war, these can be quickly and easily converted into quarters for the lord, his family, and his men. The lower floors contain stores and the quarters for the lord's soldiers. The second and third floors are reserved for the important samurai and the lord himself. The fourth floor is a watchtower from which the surrounding city can be observed. There is little doubt that the *tenshu-kaku* itself could withstand a long siege.



# The Factions of Nakamaru

Although the country of Wa has been united under the rule of a single lord, the shogun Matasuuri, it is a far cry from being settled and calm. Although he supposedly retains absolute power, the shogun is surrounded by schemes and plots, factions vying to gain his favor or replace him. The shogun is not an unquestionable monarch. He must be a consummate politician to retain his power and position.

The city of Nakamaru is no stranger to these plots and factions. Indeed, it is more familiar with them than most provincial cities. Its close connections to the lands beyond Wa has made it a hotbed of plotting and counterplotting. Every faction has found it useful to maintain some presence within the city of Wa.

The factions that have intrigues on the national level, such as the emperor and the shogun, find their allies in the districts of the samurai and nobles. Lords petty and great are courted and betrayed in the shifting dance of alliances and schemes. But, both groups also maintain ties with the foreign barbarians from across the waves, particularly the merchants and scholars from Shou Lung. Finally, there are secret connections between the powerful of the court and those secret families—the *ninja*. It is always useful to have allies who can perform dark deeds and learn secrets not meant to be known.

But there are other factions in the city, groups with interests much more local than the grand schemes of the shogun and the emperor. These groups, the *yakuza*, vie for control of the city and its lucrative business in gambling and protection. Some of these *yakuza* have semi-official recognition from the government. So great is their influence and power that they actually aid the local authorities in keeping the piece.

Finally, there are the religious factions. Unlike the great rulers and the local gangs, the great temples worry about their own position. If the shogun

can bestow more favors a temple will support him. If a family interferes with support for the temple, the priests and abbots will unhesitatingly do all they can to destroy the household. Their concern is for the power and influence of their sect, not the mundane affairs of the common people.

## The Nobles

### The Funada Clan

The Funada family is by far the most powerful clan of Nakamaru. The head of the clan, Funada Mitsuhide, is the daimyo of the province and a nephew of the shogun. His brothers and their sons are his advisors and aides. Some command his soldiers and others hold important positions in the local temples. Among the other positions held by the family are Master of the Port, Eye of the Law of the Shining Mountain Temple and Captain of the Northern Barrier (a checkpoint several miles south of the city).

Normally, Funada Mitsuhide must be in attendance to the shogun (where his wife and young children live). In his absence, the affairs of the province are managed by his brother Toyoo. There is a growing division between the two brothers. Toyoo has been working to advance his own son as the next daimyo of Nakamaru. This youth, the son of his concubine Miyagi, is older than the eldest son of Mitsuhide by many years. If Toyoo can gain enough support at the shogun's court and in Nakamaru, the elevation of his son will be guaranteed. Of course, Mitsuhide is aware of Toyoo's ambitions and is taking his own measures to block them. By making careful appointments and rewards, he is trying to slowly remove Toyoo from his powerful position as administrator of Nakamaru. Both brothers are quietly lining up allies within the family which will sooner or later tear it apart.

However, the brothers know they must still present a united front to the other nobles of Nakamaru and Wa,

and to the shogun. Toyoo cannot afford to do anything to cause public embarrassment to Mitsuhide, for this would mean the ruin of the entire family. The shogun would have no qualms about sending the Funada to a new fief—one small, powerless and out of the way. Likewise, Mitsuhide cannot allow division to be seen within his family, lest the shogun decide he is too weak to rule the province. Thus, both brothers play a very delicate game.

In addition to the internal dissension, the Funada clan must also be on guard against the schemes of other families. Although all the nobles of Nakamaru are subservient to the Funada, history is too full of ambitious vassals overthrowing their unwary or weak masters. The Funada take no chances in this area. The activities of all their vassals are closely observed. All marriages must be approved (just as the shogun must approve all marriages of the Funada clan). Construction is regulated to control the fortifying of manors. The number of bodyguards is strictly limited. Spies report on the activities of the most powerful of the vassals. To accomplish all these things, the Funada have close ties to the Higo clan of ninja and many of the lesser samurai families, who see the chance to improve their own position. Furthermore, the Funada have the aid of Taichi, a mysterious wu jen who lives in the mountains behind Nakamaru. His mysterious comings and goings normally precede fearsome events.

### The Loyal Families

Central to the Funada's strength in Nakamaru are a small core of samurai clans known as the Loyal Families. These clans earned this title in the Tokiryō War, 200 years ago. From the outset, these families had the wisdom or fortune to side with the Matasuuri family in the final struggle that unified Wa. With the decisive victory at the Shido Plain, the Matasuuri emerged



as the shogun of Wa. Those supporting them were rewarded, in accordance with their rank. While the powerful received fiefs, the lesser families were granted stipends paid directly from the shogun's treasury. The great families became daimyo; the lesser families became the Loyal Families.

The Loyal Families are a key faction of the Funada strength in Nakamaru. The stipends they receive have made them dependent on the shogun and thus his allies. While not directly vassals of the Funada, they are his for all practical purposes. He is the agent of the shogun (and the shogun's nephew) in Nakamaru and as long as he treats them with respect, they have little cause to complain. Of course, if any family should feel that it has been treated unjustly, it can present its suit to the shogun, but justice is not always fair.

The Loyal Families in Nakamaru are the Gamo, Tsuga, Oe, and Sasabe. These provide most of the samurai in Funada Mitsuhide's bodyguard and the garrisons of the province. Their status is such that they achieve minor ranks—Commander of the Left Gate Guards, Left Gate Guards Assistant, Master of the Stables, Warrior Grand Marshal, Commander of the Right Gate Guards, etc.

The Loyal Families have so far resisted any new allegiances, particularly to the Goshukara. However, they are the pawns in the battle between Mitsuhide and Toyoo as each maneuvers for their support. Currently, the Gamo, the Oe and the Tsuga are inclined towards Toyoo's camp, while the Sasabe lean to Mitsuhide. All are aware of the power struggle now occurring within the Funada family and all seek to profit from it in some way. In addition, the Oe have become more and more disillusioned with the shogun and have politely heard overtures from the Goshukara. However, they are far from ready to take action against the Funada as a whole. When the time comes, the Goshukara are

counting on the Oe rallying to their support; this the Oe are not certain about.

### The Northern Goshukara

Although far from the most powerful family of Nakamaru, the Northern Goshukara have a tremendous amount of political influence. Able to trace their ancestry directly to the emperor, this clan is given an appropriate level of respect. Although the elders of the clan hold no positions at the court of the shogun or even within the local government, they do have high-ranking positions within the traditional, but generally ceremonial, offices of the Emperor. The head of the clan, Goshukara Akinari is Regulator and Great Counselor, Second Rank, Junior Grade. His brother is Great Counselor of the Princely Left, Third Rank, Senior Grade. Although these positions have only ceremonial duties, their histories are such that the holder of the title is automatically due proper respect and etiquette.

Akinari is not just attempting to keep his clan alive, he is also attempting to restore it to its former glory. In some areas this is not too difficult—it is entirely normal for a once-mighty family to seek to restore its fortunes. Few object to the family's attempts to regain its financial and social position. However, the shogun is ever wary of the Goshukara, considering anyone with a strong connection to the emperor a potential threat. Political appointments are made with great caution done only after ensuring the Goshukara appointee will be truly loyal to the shogun. Akinari, old fox that he is, will not allow any disloyalty to the shogun (a man he secretly detests), patiently biding his time.

It is Akinari's ambition to topple the Funada Mitsuhide as daimyo of Nakamaru and replace him with a member of the Goshukara family. This he foresees as happening some time in the not-too-distant future. His ambitions beyond this are to ultimately see one

of his family toppling the shogun and the puppet emperor currently on the throne. For now, however, he is waiting for the opportunity to strike against the Funada. He is trying to engineer some disaster, embarrassment, or outright frame for the Funada family that leads to their downfall. Furthermore, his own clan must be recognized by the shogun as the proper successor to the Funada, either for services previously rendered or because Akinari exposed the sinister "plots" of the Funada.

To reach this goal, the Goshukara family has made ties with the Phoenix clan of ninja. This is as much to defend themselves from the Higo clan as it is to perform their own dastardly deeds. The Goshukara have been carefully cultivating ties at court and among the local samurai. They have also granted what few favors they can to the foreign community to gain economic support and magical aid. Without realizing it, they have come to the attention of the Royal Vagabonds, who have been instructed to use the Goshukara for their own ends. The Goshukara also have the quiet support of the local shrines, who hold a greater reverence for the emperor as the descendant of the gods.

### The Imperial Families

Filling out the ranks of the more significant samurai families in Nakamaru is a block known as the Imperial Families. These samurai clans can all trace a lineage, albeit often very distant, to the Imperial bloodline. This is of no small importance to these clans, for to possess imperial blood, even for a simple provincial family, is a great mark of distinction. These families may find themselves allied with or courted by any one of several factions and each has their own goals.

*Dengyo:* The Dengyo are driven by ambition to improve their lot, both economically and socially. Currently they are in the service of the Tsuga family



although they have hopes to establish their own line through some act of distinction. The head of the clan is a middle-aged man of pliable opinion. The piloting of the family is more decided by his wife, who manipulates her husband behind the scenes.

*Arao:* The Arao family is on the verge of internal collapse and it is quite likely that within a month there will come an application to split the family. The head of the clan is a die-hard traditionalist and is firmly resisting any suggestion that the clan might improve its fortunes by making a subtle shift in allegiances. He sees his duty with Mitsuhide and none other. His youngest son maintains the family should consider the offers of the Goshukara. His two older brothers, while less vocal, agree with him but wish to delay things for a little longer.

*Hino:* The Hino are a family in decline. Once of modest means and optimistic expectations, their fortunes have been horribly squandered by the current head of the family, Hino Sadamoto. He is a wastrel and gambler with no apparent intention of ever planning for the future needs of the family. What few retainers he can maintain are the worst hangers-on and ne'er-do-wells. Every evening is spent in drinking, gambling, or worse. He is a poor example of a samurai and is scorned by others for his behavior. His son, a young man of 14, is desperately seeking adoption by some other family that he might change his name and escape his father's shame. However, his father is not about to approve the boy's adoption by another. To his mind this would be nothing more than base betrayal by the lad.

Hino Sadamoto has recently gone seriously into debt to the Worthless Flower yakuza gang. For now they are willing to wait before calling the debt, draining him of all they can. They see no reason to protect a foolish samurai from himself, especially one who has so few important friends. The Worth-

less Flower Gang would seriously consider selling their note on Sadamoto to another for the right price. Both Mitsuhide and Toyoo have considered this possibility as a way to gain the services of the Hino family. However, the situation has not yet reached the point where either has to rely on one as undependable as Sadamoto.

*Kidera:* The Kidera are a samurai family in the true classical sense. Kidera Takeshi, the head of the family, has taken great pains to see that his sons have been educated in all the proper cultivated arts. Once the Kidera served at the court of the Emperor, for the family claims a lineage as far back as Emperor Kicho, Master of the Peach Tree. Takeshi is determined to do all he can to see that his family sustains the honor of this great tradition.

Takeshi's sons have received all the best training in the classical arts. They have studied military skills, calligraphy, painting, poetry, and the tea ceremony under local masters. Takeshi's efforts have not been a failure either. His eldest son, now a man, is a respected teacher to the Funada family. His second oldest has entered into the Winter Sect as a sohei, quickly rising through the ranks to become a commander at the local temple. His youngest son has shown a greater taste for poetry and writing than warfare and is seeking an opportunity to travel to the capital and study under the great poets there.

The Kidera are loyal to the Funada clan, the absolute obedience to their lords being part of what Takeshi has drilled into his sons. They will not consider any offers by the Goshukara. However, the growing split within the Funada places them in a much more difficult position. Takeshi's natural desire is to support Toyoo, who has managed the military and province for several years now while his brother has been off to court. However, his duty and obligation lie with Mitsuhide, a man he does not care for greatly.

Takeshi is secretly hoping that something will happen that will relieve him from the burdensome decision, that someone will show him a way to support Toyoo and still preserve the honor of his family.

*Nagoya:* The Nagoya clan is an erratic star. The family has no overriding or driving ambition, but many smaller goals pursued by different members. Nagoya Hatano, the head of the family, only seeks to maintain its current level of prosperity in the upcoming troubles which he foresees. His policy on this is that it will be best accomplished by careful neutrality. His wife is concerned for her sons and daughters and is pressing him to arrange advantageous marriages for their children. Meanwhile the family is suffering from an outrage—a brother to Hatano was slain one night in the Entertainment District. Now the sons, by the laws of vendetta, wish to seek out the killer and avenge his death.

Unknown to the father, his youngest son has made the acquaintance of a daughter of the Goshukara and has been enticed by her grace, charm and beauty. He knows that it would be difficult if not impossible to conclude a marriage, for many reasons. But this does not prevent him from attempting to see her anyway. The Goshukara suspect what is happening and are hoping to use whatever comes of it as a lever to persuade the Nagoya to join their schemes.

## The Yakuza

### The Big Head Gang

The Big Heads are a *tekiya* (street peddler) yakuza gang. Also called *yashi*, the members of this gang travel between the local villages and the city, selling goods and fake medicines. In Nakamaru, they control all the business of the small street stalls and organize special "festivals" to increase their own business.

The activities of the Big Heads are



many, but nearly all relate to the selling of goods. Apprentices travel the highways carrying shoddy goods from village to village, selling them at exorbitant prices—"snake-oil" medicines, ornamental trees without roots, "valuable" pottery, etc. In this way they are similar to the hawkers and souvenir booths found at fairs and tourist traps today. In the city, the Big Heads "license" street peddlers and the booths outside temples by collecting the rent that would normally be paid to the local landlord or temple. Only part of this is paid out, the rest filling the Big Heads' purse. Their victims complain little, however, since they are also buying protection. The Big Heads ensure that no harm comes to those who pay, either from rival yakuza, belligerent samurai, or themselves. Of course, those who refuse have all manner of misfortune—fires, beatings and mysterious accidents. But still, the Big Head gang protects the common people from the outrages of the samurai. With the income gained from these operations, the Big Heads make loans at a suitably high interest rate. This in turn makes the upper class families—wealthy merchants and samurai—dependent upon them.

The Big Heads are organized in a family type relationship. At the head is the *oyabun* (father). Under him are the underboss, deputies, warriors, and apprentices. They are all known as *kobun*. The Big Heads have three basic rules that govern what they do—not to have anything to do with the wife of another Big Head, not to talk about the Big Heads, and to absolutely obey the *oyabun*. These rules are final. If they are broken, the offender is cast out of the Big Heads and the *oyabun* sends out word that no shelter or safety will be given him by any other yakuza group.

Because the Big Heads have authority over much of the trade within Nakamaru province and hold IOU's on important officials of the city, they are semi-officially recognized by the government of the area. When difficul-

ties arise in the city, such as a dispute over taxes, the Big Heads often serve as intermediaries, negotiating a settlement. Likewise, when the local police need information on a criminal case, they will often turn to the Big Heads. The Big Heads cooperate as long as it will not hurt their own operations.

The Big Heads recruit their members from the lower walks of life. They will take in hunted criminals (unless the pursuit is too hot) and offer a chance for the eta or burakumin to escape their miserable lot. The poor of Nakamaru often seek out the Big Heads (or other yakuza gangs) for employment. Thus, the Big Heads always have a pool of recruits to draw upon.

### The Worthless Flower Gang

The second yakuza group in the city is the Worthless Flower Gang, a band of *bakuto* (gambler) yakuza. Unlike the Big Heads, the Worthless Flower Gang specializes in gambling operations of all types. The Worthless Flower Gang is trying to control all forms of gambling within the city of Nakamaru and the surrounding post towns. Most center around dice and card games. In the post towns of the highways leading in and out of Nakamaru, the Worthless Flower Gang organizes card games for the traveling samurai and noblemen, moving to and from the capital. These games are not overtly dishonest, but the odds are heavily in favor of the *bakuto*. Still, they are clever enough to see that many of the players leave with a small amount of winnings, enough to ensure their return.

In Nakamaru, the Worthless Flower Gang operates regular gambling games at several of the houses of entertainment. Here their men supervise the games of the house, taking a cut of the profits for the gang. Their customers come from all walks of life—simple fishermen and carpenters to haughty samurai. To prevent

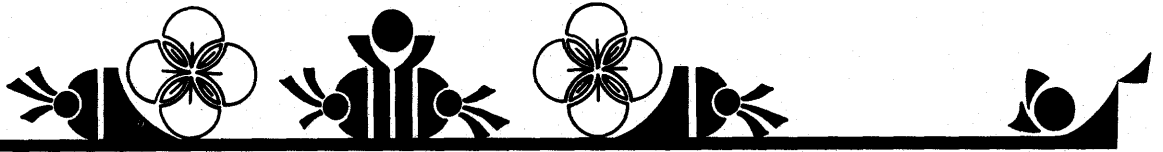
frictions and difficulties, the different games cater to different clientele. Games where a samurai plays cannot be joined by a lowly commoner or even a well-to-do merchant. Likewise, the samurai would not even consent to take part in a game with the common people. The Worthless Flower Gang is very possessive of its territory. It will not tolerate gambling operations by anyone else. Such attempts often lead to violent street brawls. However, the Worthless Flower Gang does not engage in the same types of business as the Big Head Gang and so both exist side-by-side with no difficulty.

Like the Big Head Gang, the Worthless Flower Gang is organized according to the *oyabun/kobun* relationship. Its rules demand secrecy and absolute loyalty to the *oyabun*. Also forbidden are theft and other petty crimes. Gang members advance within the ranks by experience—improving their gambling skills, demonstrating their courage in street battles, and showing their loyalty to the *oyabun*.

The Worthless Flower Gang gathers its recruits from many of the same places as the Big Heads—the eta and the common folk. However, gambling is still a more respectable activity over being a merchant, so poor and masterless samurai have been known to join the gang. Aside from their skill in weapons, these *ronin* provide the *bakuto* with important contacts in the upper classes and a sense of samurai honor, which they try to live in their own way.

The Worthless Flower Gang has received official recognition from the local government and so their operations are seldom troubled by the police. Indeed, the gang originally came into being when the local daimyo needed to swindle money from his workmen while Nakamaru Castle was being built. The daimyo paid the workmen their wages and then hired gamblers to win the money back from them. The gamblers and the daimyo shared in the profits and the workmen





were left with just enough to care for their families.

Now, however, the situation is somewhat reversed, as the bakuto prey on the samurai and many have large gambling debts they must pay off. Meanwhile, the bakuto are careful to keep anyone from owing them too much money. Penniless commoners would no longer come to their games and samurai enraged over their debts would simply refuse to pay. Both events would leave the Worthless Flower Gang out in the cold.

### The Black Mist Gang

Newly settled in the Nakamaru area, the Black Mist Gang is both a tekiya and bakuto yakuza group. The Black Mist have been trying to gain control of all illegal activities in the city of Nakamaru, an ambition not well-received by either the Big Head or Worthless Flower gangs. Based in the Foreign District, the Black Mist has viciously taken territory away from the other two gangs. The confrontations between the groups have led to bloody street battles, fought in the middle of the night. Although an outsider to Nakamaru, the Black Mist Gang apparently has powerful influence elsewhere in Wa for, despite protests from the oyabun of the other gangs, no action has been taken against them.

Like the other yakuza groups, the Black Mist use an oyabun/kobun relationship and hold roughly similar laws and regulations. However, the Black Mist is divided into different branches, based on the type of activity. Some kobun specialize in tekiya-style work, others in bakuto activities. In addition, the Black Mist has a third arm, the *gurentai*. These yakuza are thugs, providing the muscle the other two arms need. Backed by the *gurentai*, the Black Mist Gang has made violent attacks on the headquarters of the Big Head Gang. To date they have not made a direct raid against the Worthless Flower Gang who, with their ronin

followers, are better equipped to protect themselves.

For all their influence elsewhere, however, the Black Mist Gang has not gained the official recognition of the local government. This, perhaps more than anything, has hampered their growth in the city. Where the Big Head and Worthless Flower Gangs can count on the blind eye of the local authorities, the Black Mist must continually be on their guard against the police and local samurai. Thus, for local support, they have positioned themselves as supporters of the Foreign District. Where the other yakuza ignore or prey on this neighborhood, closing their ranks to foreign membership, the Black Mist have actively encouraged members from the scum that hover around the foreign merchants and captains. In return, they provide special protection to the powerful Shou Lung traders, providing them with contacts, information, and introductions normally beyond their reach. Unsuspected by the powerful of Nakamaru, the Black Mist are just beginning to gain high-level influence as the go-betweens in delicate matters between Shou Lung and Wa concerns.

## The Ninja

### The Hijo Clan

Highly secretive but immensely powerful within Nakamaru are the Hijo. A hidden clan of professional ninja, the Hijo have close ties to the Funada family, acting as their sole agents in most nefarious activities. These ties are more than simple loyalty or greed, having their roots deep in ancient tradition and *giri* — a sense of obligation and duty. The Hijo are irrevocably tied to Funada whatever their fortunes. And yet, at the same time, the Hijo are free to pursue their own ambitions and schemes. It is only when these conflict with the plans of the Funada that the intolerable arises and the Hijo must sacrifice their own aims to satisfy *giri*.

The Hijo do not actually live in Nakamaru, instead claiming a small village deep in the mountains. Here the bulk of the clan lives, free to practice their “mountain-style” *ninjitsu* away from prying eyes. However, many members of the family can be found in the city —if one knows where to look. Some act as minor advisors to the Funada family, others are lay monks at the local monasteries. One poses as the owner of a small tea shop in the entertainment district. They do not have any special recognition sign or badge, since each knows all others of the clan. Thus, they are very difficult to detect in normal life.

The head of the clan is known as the *sensei* or master. He, with the advice of other respected elders, decides all the strategy of the clan and determines all assignments. No family action can be undertaken without his approval, although he does allow the elders to handle and approve smaller routine assignments. To come to the attention of the *sensei* can be very good or very bad. For exceptional skill and cleverness, he gives rewards of harder and more difficult assignments, a sign of great favor. But for incompetence and failure he has little patience, often rewarding the bungler with death as an example to all others. He is a very hard man.

The Hijo primarily fill their ranks from within their own families, adopting only a few from outside the bloodline. This has ensured the clan's knowledge and respect for the traditions of the past, as well as increased loyalty. However, not all in the family are suited physically and temperamentally to the this life and there have been some who have left, never to return. Many such renegade members have met with unpleasant deaths, but in the city of Nakamaru two have managed to become successful merchants. These two are still required to give aid and support to the clan, but are otherwise left out of the family's darker affairs.



## The Phoenix Clan

The Phoenix are the ninja of the Goshukara family and have been so for about 100 years. While they do not have the tradition of the Hijo family, they are very ambitious and determined. They are also intensively secretive, even more so than the mysterious Hijo. Their family name, if they have one is unknown as is their origin and current base of operations. Their operations in Nakamaru may only be a branch of larger schemes or may be their true base. It is impossible to say.

The members of the clan carry no sign to indicate their loyalty and only know a few other members. Their head is a woman, a shadowy figure called the Serpent. Although all members, natural or adopted, have met her at least once, none can identify her. She always speaks from behind a screen in a faint and whispery voice. Seen with her is a large hunting dog, its head resting in her lap. This dog is vicious and trained to follow all her commands. At meetings with low ranked members or grand councils, she is known to have four bodyguards on hand at all times. However, such is their skill that these men are rarely, if ever, seen.

The Phoenix ninja have decided that their best chance to prosper and grow lies with the Goshukara family. To this end, they have been helping the Goshukara for a century now. Their ties are not nearly as close as those of the Hijo and the Funada, and the Phoenix have been known to act purely in their own self-interest. But at the same time, they know they can get away with this, for the Goshukara need their services dearly and cannot afford to be without them.

Unlike the Hijo, who recruit primarily from within their family, the Phoenix Clan freely adopts promising members into its organization. When a youth shows promise or natural talent in the arts of ninjitsu, he is sponsored by an older and more respected member of the clan. Upon proving his

skills, the youth is adopted, officially becoming a son of the sponsor. He changes his name to show this adoption and may even move in with his new "father". His old family, once the farewells are said, is forgotten and all blood ties are considered to be lost. He must be obedient to his new father as a proper son would be, following his will in all things.

When his father dies, the adopted son can have a reasonable expectation of assuming the father's role as head of the household, claiming both the name and the property, especially if there are no other male children in the line. In this way, new blood and vigor is constantly brought into the Phoenix clan. However it also increases the risks of bad judgment in adoptions and treachery by outsiders. Therefore, adoptive candidates are very carefully screened (in secret, of course!). Currently, there are about 30 members of the Phoenix clan in Nakamaru.

## The Temples and Shrines

While the Funada and Goshukara struggle for political power and the yakuza vie for the rule of the city, the different sects of Nakamaru contend for the greater glory of their temples and shrines. Although they claim to be politically neutral, most are actively involved in political life, seeking special favors and treatment for their religion.

Within Nakamaru, the most powerful religious groups are the temples of the Path of Enlightenment. These temples are more than local cults. Organized on a national scale, they are rich and influential groups. Primarily concerned with their own welfare, they side with whoever will best support their temple.

### The Shining Mountain Sect

The Shining Mountain is one of the

many sects that has grown out of the original teachings of the Path of Enlightenment. Founded in the year 1358 by the great teacher Saizu, the sect's main temple is located just outside the capital. The sect, while adhering to the overall precepts of the Path of Enlightenment, places emphasis on the intervention of various deities and great teachers, who ensure the well-being of their followers. The sect's practices are not too difficult, making them popular with the commoners of the city. Thus, the Shining Mountain Sect has a great deal of popularity within the city.

The great teachers of the sect have followed a vigorous program of building, often with the support of the imperial, shogunal, or local governments. Each province has a provincial temple under which are local subscriber temples. Part of the donations collected from these small temples are sent to the provincial temple. These in turn use the money for building projects or send it to the capital. Entrusted with this financial responsibility and the support of the citizenry, the provincial temples such as the one at Nakamaru wield great power.

The Nakamaru temple of the sect is a moderate-sized operation. The temple compound is the home for 100 *gakusho* and *shukenja* and a monastery of 10 monks. In addition, the temple maintains a force of 200 *sohei*. Nearly all of these are fiercely loyal to the temple, although there have been rare incidents of treachery among the *sohei* in the past. These *sohei* have a traditional feud with the *sohei* of the Winter Sect.

The current abbot of the temple is a distant nephew of the shogun, a member of the Funada family, son of Mitsuhide. As such, his loyalties are very much with the shogun and the daimyo. He, and his temple, have received generous donations and tax exemptions. The Shining Mountain Sect is called upon to lead most ceremonies at the local court, a prestigious honor.



## The Winter Sect

The followers of this particular sect of the Path of Enlightenment are commonly samurai and bushi. The teachings, a mixture of the Path of Enlightenment and the Way (found in Shou Lung) stress principles of action and non-action. According to the Winter Sect, true understanding is reached only when a person knows how to act without acting, to react without thought. For the perfect disciple, every action is natural and unplanned—it occurs simply because the disciple knows it is the right action. Warriors see practical uses for all this, especially the art of learning to act without thinking. They feel that mastering this philosophy allows them to strike with blinding speed in combat, as the hand moves the sword before the brain has even commanded it.

To reach this lofty state requires rigorous, even draconian, training. The disciple must practice for hours at releasing his body and mind, detaching his thoughts and emotions from his actions. If his mind is preoccupied by troubles or fears, it will interfere with his actions. Then he must work even longer to combine the two again making his now calm mind act as one with his body. This is not easily done and requires intense dedication. As such, the Winter Sect is not popular with the common masses. They have little time to waste upon such philosophical pursuits. It has become the domain of the educated and the warrior.

The temple of the Winter Sect at Nakamaru is loosely tied to the sect's temple at the capital. The organization is not as thorough as the Shining Mountain Sect, as the Winter Sect's philosophy is much more independent minded. Therefore, the Winter Sect carries less influence in the courts of the shogun. However, the local temple is strongly supported by the local samurai families, particularly the Kidera and the Nagoya. The sect has potent indirect influence in the daimyo's court since many samurai

sons are tutored by the *shukenja* of the temple.

The compound consists of a small private temple staffed by ten *shukenja* and a larger public set of buildings. Overall there are 40 *shukenja* of varying levels in the compound. Attached to the temple is a small monastery of 10 monks. These monks are hostile to the monks of the Shrine of Tsuyoi-no-kami school. However, due to its military ties, the temple is able to maintain a force of 250 *sohei*. These *sohei* are constantly feuding with the Shining Mountain sect. They are commanded by Kidera Ujisato, the oldest son of Kidera Takeshi. In addition, in times of trouble, the temple could call for another 300 to 500 warriors from the local samurai families.

Politically, the temple is torn. The abbot wishes to remain neutral in any impending struggles. However, Kidera Ujisato comes from an imperial family and so bears ancient and deep ties to the Goshukara family. However, he is restrained from any rash action both by his own loyalties to the Funada and the fact that many of his *sohei* are related to the samurai families of the city. The Goshukara are making discreet but determined attempts to win the temple over to their side through donations and quiet support of any petitions the sect places before the government.

## The Shrine of Tsuyoi-no-kami

Of all the myriad shrines of Nakamaru, who follow the beliefs of the Eight Million Gods, the shrine of Tsuyoi-no-kami, the War-God, is the most revered. General Yoshihei, who defended Nakamaru in the first Shou Lung invasion, has been elevated to the position of a local deity. Samurai, bushi and even common folk come to pray at his shrine. The prayers of the warriors are simple enough—success in combat, fortune in duels. The common folk come to pray for favor in great endeavors—it is easy enough for them to expand the role of a war-

god to the trials of everyday life.

The shrine receives a number of offerings from those who come to pray—bundles of arrows and armor are common from warriors. The rest is money or goods useful to the *shukenja* and monks of the shrine. The shrine is small, having only 10 *shukenja* and a monastery of 20 monks. However, the monastery has a reputation for the skill and valor of its disciples. They are often called to give special instruction to the daimyo's family or to the sons of his powerful retainers. Unique among the monasteries of Nakamaru, this one accepts women, training them equal to men.

Politically, the shrine of Tsuyoi-no-kami has no over-riding ambitions. However, it does have a tradition of rebellion and conspiracy, dating back to the times of the Shou Lung invasion. Since then the shrine has been a popular meeting ground for secessionists, malcontents, thieves and scoundrels. As such, the Goshukara have been using the place for discreet meetings and the *yakuza* gangs have used the shrine as a neutral territory to hold parleys. It is even said that one can find a ninja at the shrine, if only one knows where to look.

## Other Temples and Shrines

Within Nakamaru, there are numerous other small sects and shrines, as many as you might care to add. However, none of these contribute greatly to the factions of the city. Instead, they are concerned more with the day-to-day life of the people, seeing to their needs and their own survival. There are even strange temples in the Foreign District, but these are not concerned with the power struggles of Nakamaru. Still, the base of one of these uninvolved groups may be used for any *shukenja* players in the campaign. *Sohei* player characters must either belong to one of the temples listed above or belong to a temple from another city. There are no other *sohei* groups in the city.



## The Foreign Factions

### Royal Vagabonds

The Royal Vagabonds are a small group of approximately ten members who operate out of the house of Yin-kung T'o, a Shou Lung merchant. The Royal Vagabonds are much like the ninja of Wa, secretly striking in the night. However, the Royal Vagabonds are in the service of the Emperor Chin, reporting to the Shou Lung Imperial Censor, a bureaucratic secret police. Those of Wa know naught of the existence of this group, but the prudent men of Shou Lung live in terror of their very name. The Royal Vagabonds can each be identified by a magical sigil set on their chests. This sign is normally unseen to normal sight, but will appear as a faint pattern of welts when the appropriate phrase is spoken. Membership within the Royal Vagabonds is a select and highly coveted position, for the word of any member carries great power in the capital. Such is the risk of abuse that each member not only watches the activities of those they are to investigate, but also the activities of his fellows.

This group of the Royal Vagabonds have been sent to Wa posing as clerks, seamen and couriers. Their orders are to seek out and learn the activities and intentions of the Many-Hued Peacock Society, an anti-Emperor group. So far they have learned only a little, all of which has been duly reported to the Imperial Censor.

The chief operator of the Royal Vagabonds in Wa is Yin-kung T'o himself. However, the true leadership of the group comes from a mysterious being, known as the Gorath, who claims to be an official of the Celestial Bureaucracy. Its origins are unknown but it has faithfully conveyed the wishes of the Emperor Chin. The Gorath appears magically in the midst of group meetings, obediently gives any

instructions to Yin-kung T'o and hears any reports in turn. Its fearsome appearance and fiery temper more than sufficiently terrify even the stoutest of the Royal Vagabonds. Rumors of the fates of traitors at the hands of such a creature also help encourage the agents to be loyal.

### Many-Hued Peacock Society

Another import from the Shou Lung Empire is the Many-Hued Peacock Society. This group is part of a long tradition in Shou Lung, a secret society with a centuries-old history and goal. The Many-Hued Peacock Society has for 500 years striven to overthrow the imperial rule and establish the independence of those noble families that form its members. That it has not succeeded in 500 years has not dampened the enthusiasm of its members. Indeed, they are notorious for taking the "long view" towards any goal. Within the innermost circles plans are frequently charted for the decades and centuries ahead. And this is done with good reason, as Liu-hsia Chih well knows.

Liu-hsia Chih is the leader of the Many Hued Peacock Society in Nakamaru, an elderly man just reaching that point where others will see him as a venerable sage. But, his looks belie, his age, for he is far older than the 60 or so years he appears. Known only to a few is the fact that Liu-hsia Chih is one of the founders of the Many Hued Peacock Society 500 years ago. Magical spells and potions combined with a rigorous life of contemplation and philosophy have given Chih unnatural years. Unsurprisingly, he is one of the Inner Council of the Society, a group chaired by men and women like himself. More surprising is that his prime nemesis for nearly all his career has been the unrelenting creature Gorath. Their first meeting was 457 years ago and they parted on less-than-pleasant terms. Chih has remained calmly watchful ever since, delighting in foiling the machinations of Gorath. Some

of these plots have been aimed against the Society by the emperor's command, but others have been more sinister, Gorath's orders coming not from the emperor but from his true master, who remains unknown.

Working with Chih in Nakamaru are about 16 other members of the society, though none have the lineage or reputation of Liu-hsai Chih. Some members are Shou Lung noblemen fallen on hard times and driven into commerce. Others are wealthy merchants seeking advancement. A few are humble traders, angered and frustrated by the numerous imperial monopolies, regulations, and taxes that hinder them. All have been instructed in the importance of patience and planning and most do not expect great advancements during their own lifetimes. Some day, however, they believe their families will come into importance and power because of their association with the Many Hued Peacock.

Currently, the Society is in Nakamaru to revive, foster and promote old alliances with the ruling families of the province. This is all part of the greater plan. While others on the mainland work to obtain offices, special exemptions, and favorable edicts (which over the decades will erode imperial power), those in Wa are working to build a powerbase here for the day when the Many Hued Peacock will be able to operate openly. This, however, requires the protection and favor of first the local samurai, then the daimyo, and finally the shogunal court.

Currently the Society is only in the beginning stages of its plan. To reach the local samurai and conceal its intentions, the Society has been meeting as a literary club to study the classics of Shou Lung. Many samurai send their sons to study these refined arts and Chih and the others have been slowly filling their heads with anti-imperial views.

At the same time, Chih has been making careful contacts with the common classes of Nakamaru. He knows





Gorath and the Royal Vagabonds are coming, if not already in Nakamaru, and he knows they will fight him. He has been looking for willing warriors and thugs for the coming battle. In addition, he would greatly like to obtain the services of a ninja or vagabond to scout out his enemy and do those things he cannot. He has made contact with the Black Mist Gang and considers them useful, if unreliable.

### The Grey Blossom Regiment

Unique to Nakamaru, the Grey Blossom Regiment is a tightly-knit group of men. Originally a garrison troop of the Shou Lung occupation, the Grey Blossom Regiment remained behind when the occupation was finally broken. Applying to the local daimyo (with a persuasive force of arms), the regiment was allowed to remain in Nakamaru under its own charter, provided it swore allegiance to the daimyo. This allegiance has now become little more than a formality since the Regiment has become a permanent mercenary troop, normally in the service of the local daimyo.

The Grey Blossom Regiment numbers 500 men, normally bushi selected from applicants who present themselves before the commander. Foreigners are preferred and those from Nakamaru are the least likely to be accepted. The commander is fiercely jealous of his regiment's independence and is constantly suspicious of attempts to subvert the regiment's purpose. None of the officers are natives of Wa. The men of the regiment are encouraged to keep their own customs and are discouraged from adopting too many of the native ways.

Of course, the regiment is not fully independent. Its every action is watched over by the Controller General, a samurai official appointed by the daimyo. There is an uneasy truce between the bushi of the daimyo and his retainers and the men of the Grey Blossom. The daimyo makes certain

that Grey Blossom detachments are always paired with equal or greater numbers of his own men. They do not command positions of great trust and are often used for the most arduous and unpleasant tasks. The daimyo and the soldiers of Nakamaru consider them expendable and will certainly not risk their own lives for a Grey Blossom man. The regiment's only protection is for its men to watch each other's backs, since no one else will do it for them. The commander has also found it very wise to remain apolitical in the affairs of Wa. He knows how the political winds blow, but will not commit his regiment to a faction unless he must. Even then, he doesn't accept the best contract, he joins the cause most likely to win.

As a mercenary unit, the Grey Blossom accepts small contracts from most who offer them. Many such contracts are for bodyguards for travelers, or marines to protect local shipping from pirates. The Funada family also employs them for various tasks, particularly those that keep it outside the city. Of late, the Grey Blossom Regiment has been sounded out by the Many Hued Peacock Society and under observation by the Royal Vagabonds. The Goshukara have managed to subvert several junior officers and are hoping for the day when they will gain the loyalty of the regiment for their own ends.

## The Other Factions

### Wako

Plying the oceans mainly to the north and west of Nakamaru and to a lesser extent the straits to the east, are the *wako* — pirates of the ocean. Their reputation is well-known, heartless killers who leave survivors only by accident. It is only in the past several years that they have become active in these waters. Always careful, they prey on ships well out tacking close to the populated shore. Their favorite victims are the merchant junks sailing

between Shou Lung and Wa. While they seldom bag immensely rich cargoes (these are normally sent by magical means), they do quite well reselling the common goods they seize. These appear in markets throughout Wa and Kozakura.

What is not commonly known is that Nakamaru is one of the *wako* bases. From here they receive secret support of the Funada family who grants them use of the port in exchange for a portion of all goods taken. Still, they try to keep out of sight as much as possible. There is always a chance that a Shou Lung merchant will recognize them or their ship. Too much notoriety will only bring the shogun's agents down upon them. Already there have been several complaints from Shou Lung envoys.

The principal concern of the *wako* is to stay alive and learn of new shipments coming and going from Nakamaru. The various captains have their own agents within the city, particularly in the waterfront and foreign districts. *Wako* sailors, when in port, are naturally drawn to the gambling rooms of the *yakuza*. Not surprisingly, many of them become involved in drunken, swaggering brawls.

### The Goblin Rats

On the outskirts of the city, in an older section near the marshes, are a few blocks of dilapidated and abandoned buildings. This area has a dark and gruesome reputation. In one house the mistress went mad; in another, the children disappeared never to be seen again. Across the street, the master was executed for treason, while the ruin several houses down was once a prosperous mansion which was destroyed by fire. It is said there are spirits everywhere, moaning through the willow trees.

This area is the abode of a clan of goblin rats. During the day, the rats generally remain in their rat form, preferably out of sight. At night, they take on their characteristic ratman shape



and slip through the darkest streets of the city. They prey upon the weak, unwary, and besotted, often cruelly teasing their victims before the kill. They also lurk about the cemeteries and temples, awaiting the chance to desecrate the dead, an evil practice in which they take great delight.

### The Oni

Lurking near the Temple of the Shining Mountain is a large and savage common *oni*. For many weeks, he has been terrorizing those commoners who come to the temple during the early morning and late night hours. The creature has taken exception to what he considers the noisy boastfulness of the temple's shukenja and is exacting his revenge. Although the sohei of the temple have searched, the creature has managed to avoid discovery. It is currently hiding in a deserted watchman's post on a destitute and bleak street.

### The Human Oni

Sometimes seen wandering about the city is a fearsome *oni*, who terrifies all who see him. However, he does not seem intent on particular harm. This *oni* was human in a previous life and is now seeking out a particular holy man for guidance to attain a more perfect spiritual self.

### The Buso

At the end of one of the poorer blocks of Nakamaru stands a deserted shrine. The once raked yard is now overgrown. The shingles of the roof have begun to slough off. The floorboards are weak and rotten. Sixty years ago this was a flourishing site, well-patronized by the neighbors. But then one of the shukenja committed sacrilege. Breaking into the sacred sake, he became quite drunk and then, sword in hand, defiled the shrine with the blood of his fellows. Consumed by his madness, he locked himself inside after driving away those

attracted to the commotion. In the morning, Lord Funada's men arrived, only to find him dead. The shrine has never been reopened, since all have been repelled by the horror of his deeds.

Recently, disease has struck the neighborhood. It is being caused by a *tigbanua buso*. True to his horrid species, the creature has taken residence in the old shrine intent upon causing the destruction of humankind. The *tigbanua's* goal is to steadily convert as many locals as possible into *tagamaling buso*. Given the timid nature of the locals, he will succeed unless some brave soul comes forward to stop him.

### The Ikiryō

Six months ago, Funada Mitsuhide brought a new wife into his household, a charming and delicate woman, barely more than a girl. Not unnaturally, Lord Mitsuhide has granted her more time and attention than his other two wives, to whom he is somewhat accustomed. This is not a situation that has set well with his Inner wife or his second wife. However, the Inner wife is clever enough to bide her time in silence, knowing that this infatuation will pass.

The second wife is not nearly so patient or reasoned. Before the arrival of Lady Nyo (Nyo-ko), she held the principal affections of her husband. Now she fears she is being pushed aside. Her children will be forgotten in favor of those of the Inner Wife and Lady Nyo. She is terrified and furious at the thought of this, but fears to do anything. Thus, she is being consumed by secret jealous rage. Unknown to her, this has released an *Ikiryō* to plague Lady Nyo. It's hauntings have only recently begun and currently no one suspects the *ikiryō's* presence. Lord Mitsuhide will not willingly begin an investigation, not wishing to admit any disharmony in his household.

### The Kuei

Seventeen years ago, Lord Toragi, uncle of Lord Mitsuhide (the current daimyo of Nakamaru), secretly pledged his aid to the Goshukara cause. Before he could fulfill his pledge, he was banished at the orders of the shogun, framed by a plot created by his younger brother (see the Timeline). Now his *kuei* seeks to possess an able and noble warrior so that he can fulfill his pledge of service to the Goshukara. The *kuei* lurks on the grounds of the castle, particularly that of the second bailey where the sentence was pronounced.

### The Emissary of the Sea Lord

Only recently arrived in Nakamaru is a strange youth, clearly one of the Spirit Folk. He arrived at dawn and was carried in a palanquin to an old mansion escorted by an armed retinue in the style of a powerful lord. Since arriving, he has done nothing but make his presence conspicuous to the samurai of the city, never offensive but always visible.

The stranger is a special envoy of the Sea Lord, the great spirit noble of the oceans. He has been sent on a diplomatic mission to Nakamaru to formally protest the failure of Wa to make proper offerings to the Sea Lord. As demanded by the etiquette of his rank, race, and custom, he has made no attempt to contact the daimyo, waiting instead for a summons to appear before Lord Mitsuhide. He will consider the employ of any well-disciplined warrior but is not directly looking to provoke any hostilities. The Funada have some general idea of his mission but are loathe to do anything until they receive a similar envoy from the shogun. Obviously, there is a great deal of tension among the Funada samurai concerning the Envoy's men.

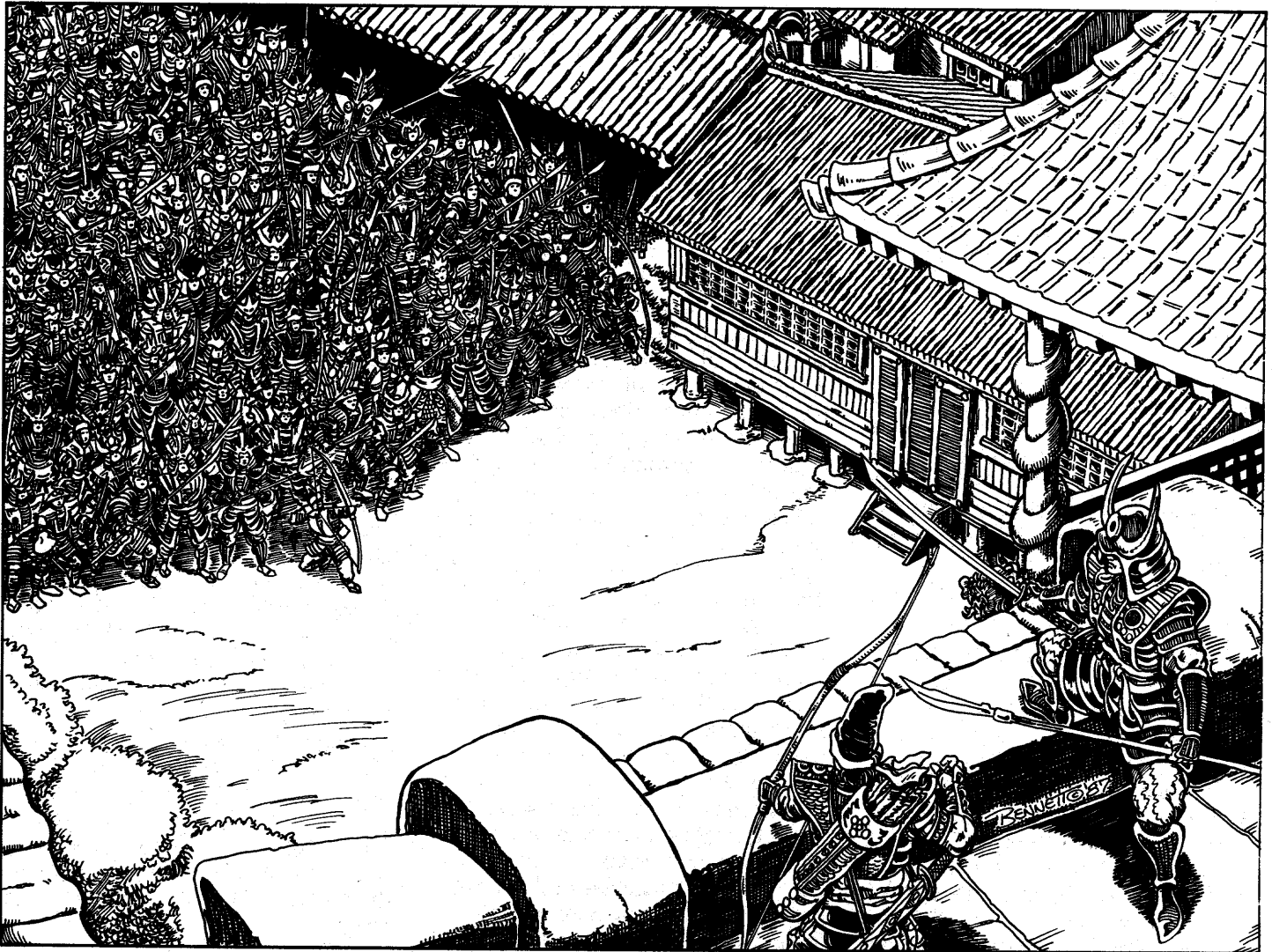
## The Hengeyokai Society

In the last two years, the restrictive edicts of the shogun have been increasingly directed at controlling the hengeyokai. More and more the freedoms this race had, being outside the normal society, are being taken away. Not surprisingly, this has met with little joy among the hengeyokai. Never organized or overly social, they have

not been able to effectively protest these edicts and so have resorted to forming bandit groups and secret bands.

One such group has arisen in Nakamaru. Meeting under the pretense of studying the classics, the hengeyokai debate among themselves as to their course of action. Some advocate violent protest so that they might at least preserve their face and honor. Others

suggest they protest directly to the shogun—an honorable but ultimately fatal thing to do. Still another group wants to flee into the forests, abandoning the world of men. Currently each view is held with equal force. However, the hengeyokai, whatever their opinion, are looking for more of their kind to join the society. Any new recruits could swing the balance towards one of the three views.



# The Plots of Nakamaru

Within the city of Nakamaru are nearly endless opportunities for adventure. Many of these are evident just from reading the descriptions of the different factions of the city, their troubles, and goals. Even more adventures can be created by the DM, using Nakamaru the way it is intended—as a setting for a campaign filled with adventure of your own creation. In addition, a main story plotline and several sub-plots are in this module. Player characters may immediately become involved in some of these, others may build slowly and patiently until the player characters are in a position to become involved in them. There may even be some plots in which the player characters never become involved. Do not despair! There is always another adventure around the corner.

The story plots given here are divided into two parts. The first is an overview of each plot, detailing who is trying to do what to whom and what is likely to come of it. These descriptions assume the player characters do not become involved and that everything happens according to plan.

The second part is the Events. These are the occurrences outlined in the various plots, and will give your actors the setting they need to play out their parts. Some of these events are dangerous, filled with opportunities for swordplay, derring-do, and magic. Others are very social events that can only be played by acting out scenes and confrontations. Many players will find these very different from their normal roleplaying experiences.

These two elements, along with the descriptions of the factions and the NPC book, are the basic tools needed to create intrigue and mystery in Nakamaru. But only the basics. You, as the director of this little play, must provide life and inspiration to your actors. Like actors, NPCs will only do what you ask or make them do. Don't hesitate to create scenes of drama, humor and excitement if they

enhance the overall story!

## The Plot Overviews

The plot overviews given here are detailed descriptions of the events that will occur for any scheme to reach its realization. In a way these are much like little plays. Each is presented with a cast of characters involved, various events that are used to play out the plot and detailed descriptions of the steps and schemes of each. What these descriptions do not take into account are the actions of the player characters. No attempt has been made to calculate what the characters might do in any situation or even what the possible reaction of an NPC might be to player character actions. The player characters are simply too unpredictable. One group might join forces on one side, another group on the other side. It is even likely that a single group of player characters might find themselves split between two opposing factions! Unlike most roleplaying adventures, this result is actively encouraged. This is a module about schemes and plots and the player characters should always be encouraged to become entangled in these webs.

The plots of Nakamaru are constant and ever-flowing. Before beginning, be sure that you have read over several if not all these plots. These are not single adventures to be played out before another begins. Several plots should be happening at once. Ideally, your players will have to make notes about who is who and what side they are on just to keep things straight. This only serves to increase their involvement in the game.

Each overview has its information arranged as follows: 1) A summary of the goal of the plot. 2) The NPCs who will be involved in the plot. Others may become involved, but those listed are definitely used. 3) A detailed description of the plot and how it unfolds if the player characters are not involved. 4)

Suggestions on ways the player characters can become involved in the plot.

### A. Blood of the Yakuza

*The Plot:* The Black Mist gang is attempting to expand its borders again, at the expense of the Big Head gang. However, their bullying of the Big Heads has far greater repercussions than anyone expected, drawing samurai and yakuza alike into the affair that threatens the daimyo himself.

*The Actors:* Jirozu no Nakamaru, Goshukara Sadamoto, Goshukara Akinari, O-Kaze, Phoenix ninja, Big Head thugs, Black Mist thugs, Worthless Flower thugs, Funada Mitsuhide, Funada Toyoo, Funada Hashiba, Kidera family, Winter Sect sohei, Shining Mountain sohei, Tsuga family, Gamo family, Sasabe family

*The Story:* For several weeks now, the Black Mist gang has lain quiet, biding its time for another move into Big Head territory. Now it seems the time has come.

Taking advantage of a festival at a minor shrine, the Big Head gang has organized a small showing of peddlers and con men. They will cluster about the gate, hawking their cheap goods and promising great riches. Among the tekiya are fortunetellers and pick pockets. The peddlers sell all manner of worthless items, lying about their value and origin. Some pretend to be drunk; others have tales of misery and hard luck, forcing them to sell at low prices. Among them also are the “collectors,” gathering the rent from those honest stalls that were “invited” to attend. Although their methods are cutthroat and crooked, the festival is generally a colorful and happy affair. Since it is small, the Big Head gang has little concern that there will be trouble. They are wrong.

Into this happy scene come ten



Black Mist gurentai. Casually entering at first, they start to throw their weight around. Stall owners are told, "Pay your rents to the Black Mist. Those weak-eyed fellows can't protect you anymore." There is a protest from one old fellow. Suddenly, there is a crash! His table has collapsed and his collection of wares are strewn into the street. Before anyone can decipher how, swords and knives flash in a brief, fierce battle. Three men drop, wounded or dead, and the Big Heads scatter. Laughing at the cowardice of the Big Heads, the Black Mist leave.

When the Big Heads return, not only do they find their comrades dead, but they can plainly see their deaths were gruesome and cruel. A few hot-heads demand an immediate retaliation, but the *oyabun* counsels patience and planning. It is his intention to wait for the right moment and strike when crushing success is guaranteed. For a time his gang will lose business, but he calculates they cannot win an open war against the Black Mist.

Several days pass in inaction and the discontent among the radicals of the Big Heads increases. Finally, thirty of them, unable to bear the shame any longer, seek out the *oyabun* of the Black Mist at his headquarters. They don't even get close to him. On the street outside another great bloody battle ensues. During it, several unfortunate commoners are cut down. This battle catches the attention of the daimyo; indeed with about 50 brawlers there is no way it can be ignored.

Normally, he would not concern himself overly with the affairs of the yakuza as long as they keep to themselves. He has only minor information on the affair at the festival. However, this last fight was too public—the unruliness in the streets is getting out of hand and he must act. Therefore, he issues an edict calling for the arrest of all members of both gangs that can be found. Once arrested they are to be imprisoned until he can decide the disposition of the cases.

Naturally, this does not sit well with either gang. The Black Mist have little choice but to temporarily disappear while their contacts in the Foreign District (several of the larger Shou Lung merchants) attempt to sway Lord Mitsuhide's opinion. Meanwhile, the temples and shrines of the city also begin to work on the daimyo, this time in favor of the Big Head gang. Without the services of the gang, the temples and shrines will have to collect their own rents. Some temples welcome this, enabling them to raise the shop-owners' rents, which is still less than what the owners paid to the yakuza. Other temples are unprepared to do their own collection, preferring the Big Head gang handle the business. These groups strongly favor leniency for the Big Heads. Gradually, the other factions of the city are drawn into the dispute.

The lines are drawn into three camps. The smallest and least important in the dispute are the Black Mist gang, the Shou Lung merchants, and thus, indirectly, the Many Hued Peacock Society and the Royal Vagabonds (although neither is aware of the other). The group siding with Lord Mitsuhide (against the Big Head and Black Mist gangs) includes the powerful Funada family, the Shining Mountain Temple and all the Loyal families, except the Oe (who are trying to remain uncommitted in the affair). The third faction (desiring clemency for the Big Heads) includes the Winter Sect temple, the Tsuyoi-no-kami Shrine, the Goshukara family, the Kidera family (due to their support of the Winter Sect), and the Arao (who are showing discreet support for the Goshukara without directly proclaiming themselves). On the sidelines, the Worthless Flower Gang are patiently waiting and scheming in order to profit from the misfortunes of the other gangs.

Lord Mitsuhide, in a serious bind, summons the *oyabun* of the Big Head gang to an audience so that he can explain himself. Although private, it is at best semi-secret, easily discovered

by those who wish to know. Two groups in particular are especially interested in this meeting. The Black Mist gang, paranoid and suspicious, decides the meeting must never take place. Gathering the best of their gurentai, they plot a raid to finally and totally eliminate the Big Heads. With the tekiya gang destroyed, there will be no more dispute and the Black Mist will be able to operate freely again. Furthermore, the Black Mist will have solved Lord Funada's problem for him. Thus the gang should be able to replace the Big Heads with little trouble. However, first the Big Head organization must be destroyed.

The night of the meeting, the Black Mist gang will attack the Big Heads throughout the city. Their goal is to destroy the gang in a single night, quickly and before anyone can interfere. However, things do not work out as planned. The Worthless Flower gang has been waiting its chance and when the Black Mist move, the Worthless Flowers strike. They do not want the Black Mist to win, since this would make them the most powerful gang in the city. Shortly after the fighting starts, the Black Mist finds itself under attack!

At the same time, Goshukara Sadamoto sees a chance to totally ruin the Funada. He persuades his brother to his plan and they contact the Phoenix clan. They hire the Phoenix to slay the Big Head *oyabun*, but not until he is within the grounds of the Funada compound. Furthermore, it must appear to all that the Funada were behind the deed. The Goshukara ask no details of the Phoenix clan, explaining only what they need done. The price is steep since the task is very dangerous, but the Goshukara and Phoenix manage to come to terms.

The Phoenix in turn decide Jirozu no Nakamaru must die by the hand of a Funada retainer, or at least that it must look that way. They assign the task to one of their best, a woman known as O-Kaze. The day of the meeting, she will enter the compound





and hide. When Jirozu arrives, she will enchant one of the Loyal family samurai to attack! The man will almost certainly be cut down, but while the guards are busy she will make sure that Jirozu dies. The plan is a risky one, chancing the exposure of the Goshukara's role in the affair. However, if it succeeds, the rewards will be great.

By the night of the meeting, the city teeters on the brink of chaos. Although the samurai and bushi of the Funada patrol the streets, they are not enough to be everywhere. The secret war of the yakuza rages at a bloody peak. The temples of the city are gathering their sohei and the samurai families have placed their warriors on alert. The countryside is turning into an armed camp. Unless the player characters affect the outcome, O-Kaze's plan will succeed and Jirozu will fall.

Jirozu's death will clearly seem an act of treachery by the Funada. He was popular with the people and they will take his murder poorly. The Big Heads, betrayed by the lord they trusted, will split from the Funada (with whom they had always had friendly relations) and side firmly with the Goshukara camp. Even the Worthless Flower Gang, who up to now had remained indifferent to all but their own survival, will be hostile to the Funada. In short, the Funada clan will find that popular support has been cut out from under them.

The Funada will also be feeling pressure from the shogun. Reports of increasing discontent and upheaval have been reaching the capital, something the shogun does not want to hear. His rule depends on his daimyo remaining peaceful and stable. This clearly is not what is happening in Nakamaru. The Funada are well aware that he will be sending officials and ninja spies to learn the state of affairs in the city. His displeasure with the current situation is almost certain unless it can be quickly brought under control. If he is displeased, the Funada

are likely to suffer banishment to some insignificant province on the edge of nowhere.

Protecting themselves, the Funada order the Hino ninja to watch the highways into Nakamaru and report the movements of any strangers. They are to especially watch for any possible ninja activity. The Funada want no unfavorable reports to reach the shogun. They also order a second mission for the Hino to carry out. It is clear that the Goshukara were behind the death of Jirozu. To forestall further Goshukara schemes, the Hino are to spy on them and keep Mitsuhide and Toyoo informed of their plans. Soon there are ninja positioned throughout the province and one within the very camp of the Goshukara.

Sure enough, the caution of Mitsuhide is rewarded. Incited by the Goshukara, the sohei of the Winter Sect plan a dawn raid on the Shining Mountain temple. However, the ninja among the Goshukara and another at the Winter Sect temple both alert the Funada of the plans. With the agreement of their cousin, Funada Hashiba, Eye of the Law of the Shining Mountain temple, Mitsuhide and Toyoo set a trap. Unknown to the attacking sohei, those within are not sleeping complacently. Armed and armored, they have been joined by the retainers of the Funada who slipped in secretly during the night. The attack becomes a rout as the attackers are themselves surprised. Driven back to the Winter Sect temple, the sohei prepare for the final battle. Meanwhile in the small alleys of Nakamaru, the yakuza wage a war of their own, undisturbed by the preoccupied lords of the city. On all sides the call is made for allies! But who will come?

*Player Character Involvement:* The conclusion of this plot is left undecided. The DM must decide the final outcome. Much of this decision should be based on the activities of the player characters. Their actions, more than anything else, will affect the course of

the main plot outlined above.

The main plot provides many opportunities for player characters to get involved. Yakuza characters can side with any one of the gang factions, perhaps leading their gang to dominance over all others. Samurai, bushi, and kensai characters can belong to any of the family factions, joining in the battles to come. Sohei can also be easily involved in the action in the same manner. Ninja characters may be recruited as spies or worse, perhaps becoming involved in the death of Jirozu. Monks can either side with the Winter Sect (taking part in the defense of the temple) or join forces with the Tsuyoi-no-kami Shrine, perhaps taking advantage of the confusion to strike at their enemies. Wu jen can aid and assist virtually any side they please, the talents of a sorcerer always being appreciated. Finally, shukenja have several interesting choices. Those more militant minded can join in battles, those with a political bent can act as peacemakers or plotters. There is much to be done in Nakamaru before peace can be restored.

There is a second reason the main plot remains unresolved. The outcome of all the intrigue in Nakamaru can result in a large shift in the balance of power, locally and nationally. Any changes are at the discretion of the DM. Perhaps removing the daimyo would require other changes in the campaign—more than the DM may care to make. Thus, the coup fails and the Funada remain in power. Perhaps a change of rulers affects very little. Indeed, the rise of the Goshukara might give player characters good opportunities to rise to positions of command and responsibility, increasing roleplaying and adventure possibilities. Should this be the case, a successful coup might be a very desirable thing for the life of the campaign.



## B. Breaking the Arrow

*The Plot:* The Goshukara family intends to cause the Funada to lose face. Through lies and deception, the Funada will be tricked into committing a breach of etiquette before the Shogunal envoy who is coming to Nakamaru. This loss of face will force Funada Mitsuhide to suffer, at the least, a great loss of influence among the nobles.

*The Actors:* Funada Mitsuhide, Funada Toyoo, Goshukara Akinari, Oe Shodayu, Lord Masago, a Phoenix ninja

*The Story:* The arrival of the Sea Lord's envoy has thrown the Funada clan into a state of near-panic, as much as can be perceived deep in the inner chambers of their mansion. Clearly the arrival of the envoy is a great distinction for the Funada, but the envoy has not followed any of the proper forms of etiquette. This has placed the Funada in a very unpleasant position.

Wittingly or not, the envoy has insulted the shogun by not appearing in the capital. Worse (for the Funada) is that he chose to present himself in Nakamaru, implying that the Funada have greater favor with the Sea Lord than the Matasuuri! Secondly, the envoy arrived unannounced. No reception was prepared for him, no lodgings, ceremonies or servants provided, making the Funada look incompetent. Now he has shamed the shogun and the daimyo!

So, unannounced and unprovided for, the envoy has been waiting. The Funada, caught in the center, have sent a messenger to the capital bearing the news. Now they have learned they have three weeks to prepare for the arrival of a powerful official of the shogun's courts—Lord Masago, Chief Archivist and Great Subject of the Grand Perceptorate. He is a man many degrees higher in status than Funada Mitsuhide and so, in light of

past failings, it is vital that a proper reception be prepared for him.

Preparing such a reception is no simple affair. It is a potential minefield of social and political errors. Everything must be considered — the choice of rooms, the seating arrangements, the size of escorts, the color of clothing, the proper greetings, the decorations used; in short, every detail counts. The Funada simply are not prepared for so important a visit. Fortunately, there is another family with the knowledge and skill to advise the Funada, and therein lies the problem.

That family, skilled in the intricate forms of court etiquette, is none other than the Northern Goshukara. To prepare for the reception, the Funada have been forced to call upon the services of their known rival. And naturally, Goshukara Akinari has agreed to help.

Akinari sees two possible gains to come from Mitsuhide's dilemma. First, Mitsuhide owes him some amount of obligation for this service. This, however, is not what Akinari wants. Instead, Akinari has set upon a more devious plan, intended to shame and humiliate Mitsuhide.

Akinari knows that his actions and plans will be carefully watched by the Funada. They naturally (and quite rightly!) suspect him of some sinister scheme. Therefore, all his preparations for the reception seem to be perfectly planned and coordinated. But Akinari is subtle and has introduced an "error" in the reception. He has carefully prepared two diagrams of the seating arrangement that will be used at the reception. The first he has given to Mitsuhide's men. The second he carries secretly on his person at all times.

When the shogun's envoy arrives in three weeks, the seating of his retainers and those of Lord Mitsuhide will be incorrect. The seating appears to deliberately insult Lord Masago's men, placing them on a lower position in respect to their equals in the Funada

clan. This is an intolerable insult. Meanwhile, Akinari, through the services of a Phoenix ninja, will substitute the seating diagram he secretly prepared for the one Mitsuhide used.

Naturally, when the insult comes to light Masago will demand Mitsuhide account for this action. Mitsuhide will equally naturally attempt to blame Akinari. However, Akinari will protest that he created a correct seating plan but that Mitsuhide evilly changed it to insult Masago's men. In his defense, he will demand that the papers he prepared be brought forth. The correct seating plan will be there (placed by the ninja), confirming Akinari's story.

At this point, Mitsuhide has suffered a great shame, a blot that extends to the entire Funada family. Unable to withstand the obvious treachery of Goshukara Akinari, Oe Shodayu will attempt to strike down Akinari! The attempt will fail, although Akinari will be wounded. The Oe family will be imprisoned in their household for three years as a punishment.

In the end, Akinari will have successfully humbled Funada Mitsuhide. However, the shogun will not replace the Funada family. Instead, Toyoo, seeing the winds of fortune will lay all blame on his brother and will be granted the position of daimyo. Mitsuhide will be banished to the Outer Isles.

*Player Character Involvement:* Samurai player characters can choose to take sides with either the Funada or the Goshukara. Goshukara bodyguards should defend Lord Akinari from Oe Shodayu's attack. Funada's men may either join Shodayu (precipitating a full-scale battle) or try to restrain him. Ninja player characters may be called upon by both sides to spy on the other faction and get wind of the scheme. What happens next is up to the player character. A ninja player character may also be the one used by Lord Akinari. Shukenja of high station can be invited to the reception. Both shukenja and wu jen can learn of the plot through spells,



and player characters can attempt to convince Lord Mitsuhide to use spells to investigate matters. However, since this plot involves the highest and most powerful citizens, player characters will have to be important personages to become involved.

### C. The Broken Flower

*Plot:* At Toyoo's urging, the Funada take action against the Northern Goshukara. Through the Gamo family, the Funada are going to contrive a series of incidents that will outrage the retainers of the Goshukara, goading them into some rash action, preferably an attack. When this happens, the Funada will demand the Goshukara make an accounting for the actions of their retainers.

*The Actors:* Funada Toyoo, Gamo Hidenobu, Gamo Mitsutoshi, Gamo Mochikuni, Mashida Kowa, Oka Sanai, Oka Yoshinaka, Goshukara Akinari, Goshukara Sadamoto

*The Story:* The times have become too dangerous to harbor vipers within the coverlets, or so reasons Funada Toyoo. The growing split between Mitsuhide and himself is encouraging the plottings and designs of others. Foremost of these, both in danger and cunning, is the Goshukara family. It is time they were removed.

Still, how does one destroy a family that once sent children to the Jade Throne and can call the emperor cousin? A minor family would be easy—a contrived insult or the hint of treachery followed by a swift and brutal vengeance. At worst, there might be a complaint to the shogun, but the Funada could easily lay it aside. This business of the Goshukara is more than Toyoo has ever attempted (not that he isn't devious enough). Forming his plans late in the night, he has chosen to proceed without informing his brother. If he succeeds, he knows that he will gain the glory. If he fails,

the results could be disastrous. It all depends on the wheels of fortune.

In the first step of his plan, he has secretly summoned three brothers, Hidenobu, Mitsutoshi, and Mochikuni. These men, black sheep of the Gamo family, have suffered for years, denied lands, commands, and titles. A private drinking party is held, a great honor for the brothers. Gradually, he describes how greatly and dearly he sorrows for their misfortunes and how, would that he could, he would improve their lot. But, alas, his hands are tied, for the brothers have incurred the wrath of the Goshukara clan. Have they done something to offend the Goshukara? He instructs them to think carefully upon this, that a reconciliation begin.

Several days later, Toyoo plans a similar meeting with Goshukara Sadamoto. This time, the topic of conversation will come around to the Gamo, in particular the unfortunate brothers. Someone has suggested that they be elevated to commanders of the guard, much against Toyoo's wishes. Sadamoto could do him a great service, to which he would be greatly obliged, if Sadamoto would remind others what true villains these brothers are. Out of politeness, Sadamoto agrees. However, upon returning home, he discusses the strange request with his brother. At this point, neither is sure of Toyoo's game, so they will play along but very carefully.

Over several weeks, truisms and rumors about Hidenobu, Mitsutoshi and Mochikuni grow, but their source can never be discovered. They do not come from Akinari or Sadamoto, who are careful not to become involved. Instead, their retainers are spreading gossip about the three brothers. In particular Oka Sanai, Oka Yoshinaka and Mashida Kowa (who have no love of the brothers in the first place) voice their opinions loudly. It is at this point that Toyoo takes the next step in his plan.

With little difficulty, Toyoo arranges for a yakuza of the Worthless Flower

Gang to post a small poem on the gates of the Tsuyoi-no-kami shrine. It gently insults the bravery and honesty of the Gamo brothers. It is unsigned and the style does not indicate who wrote it. But rumors quickly surface that it was written by Oka Sanai, a satirist of some note. Worse yet, the poem is copied and pasted up throughout town by local wits. The Gamo brothers are furious. Toyoo meets with them and coaches them in an even funnier and more biting poem about Sanai. This too appears overnight at the shrine, but a witness saw Gamo Hidenobu post the poem.

Appropriately incensed, Oka Sanai and his friends seek out the Gamo brothers to confront them and gain justice. There is no doubt a meeting would lead to bloodshed.

If Sanai and his fellows find the brothers, a wild duel will break out in the streets of Nakamaru, started by Sanai. Unless the Goshukara move quickly to deal with the situation, one of three outcomes will occur.

If the brothers are slain, a vendetta will begin between the Gamo and the Oka and Mashida. Toyoo will accuse the Goshukara of purposely breaking the peace, a dangerous crime. If the brothers succeed (DM's choice unless the player characters intervene), Oka and Mashida families will request a vendetta of the daimyo. This will naturally be refused and these families will lose much prestige. If the losses on both sides are about equal, the Goshukara will be accused of being unable to control their own men. This is a grave charge, for should the shogun hear it, he would certainly demand the execution of all involved. At the least, Goshukara's men will be taken prisoner and Akinari's authority will be seriously questioned.

*Player Character Involvement:* First and foremost, the role of any of the actors of this plot (other than the Funada or Goshukara) can be filled by a player character. Thus, if the player characters are retainers of the Funada



da, they and not the Gamo brothers might be called to carry out Toyoo's scheme. Likewise, player characters loyal to the Goshukara could be persecuted instead of the Oka families and others.

Even if the player characters are not directly involved in events, there is still a vendetta that will occur. Here again player characters can become involved as friends of either side. Such affairs always need companions to stand by the principals. In Wa it is not uncommon for a man to call on his friends to help him seek revenge. But remember, vendettas seldom end with a single act of revenge. Once started, each side always feels it has cause to continue the feud.

#### **D. The Lady of the Summer Bamboo**

*The Plot:* The monks of the Winter Sect intend to discredit the spirituality of their rivals at the Tsuyoi-no-kami Shrine by secretly tempting them with the strongest of earthly emotions—passion and jealousy.

*The Actors:* Kogi, a Winter sect monk, Bupposo, a Winter sect monk, O-Shino, a young maiden, Ichi, a Big Head yakuza, Kaian, a Tsuyoi-no-kami monk, Anchin, a young Tsuyoi-no-kami monk

*The Story:* Kogi and Bupposo, elder masters of the Winter Sect Monastery and incorrigible pranksters, have spent the day in necessary relaxation, admiring the view of the ocean from the slopes of the mountains outside Nakamaru. A warm jar of sake, judiciously used, has helped soothe their restless minds. Reminiscing on days past, they remember some of their more playful escapades before they became important and powerful teachers at the monastery. They are saddened by how they have changed and fear they have lost their sense of balance about the flow of life around them. It is clear that something must

be done and what better thing is there than a grand trick!

Quickly they formulate their plans. Who shall the target be? Of course, those self-righteous and insufferable monks of the shrine will be the target! How shall they suffer? A pricking of their pride seems in order.

The next day, Kogi and Bupposo begin their scheme. Bupposo seeks out Ichi, a yakuza of the Big Heads who often visits the temple. He requests Ichi find him a young maiden of homely appearance but good background, for she is needed at the temple. She must be able to keep quiet and act a part well, for she will be engaged in affairs of the temple most urgent and secret. Kogi meanwhile sends a messenger to Taichi, the old wu jen in the mountains. They have long been friends and conspirators. The old man readily agrees to pay Kogi a visit.

For many days Kogi patiently awaits his friend, while Ichi pays visits about town, searching for a woman such as Bupposo requested. Finally, both are rewarded. In a puff of pine-scented air, Taichi appears in Kogi's cell. After a walk in the garden and tea, Kogi explains the plan.

He and Bupposo intend to find an agreeable woman of less than overwhelming attractiveness and place enchantments upon her so that she is irresistibly attractive to men. Once prepared, they want her to introduce herself to the monks of Tsuyoi-no-kami Shrine. They, smitten by her beauty and grace, will then prove that they are indeed only men after all. She will gain the pleasure of toying with the hearts of men well beyond the hopes of other women. Will Taichi be so kind as to assist them with the enchantments?

It is an offer Taichi cannot resist. His own sense of humor agrees with his opinions of the Tsuyoi monks. That shrine is cool towards the Funada, his patrons. He sees no harm in causing them a little trouble.

Meanwhile, Ichi returns with the

young maiden O-Shino and she agrees to her role in the scheme. For several days Taichi prepares and casts enchantments until the goal is achieved. Heavily veiled from the sight of men, she makes her way to the Shrine. There, in casually lifting her veils, she reveals her face to the monks as they practice. The effect works perfectly.

Two monks in particular are taken by her looks—Kaian and Anchin. One is young and not unattractive, the other older and dignified. The actions of youthful Anchin can be explained by his age, but Kaian should have known better. As the days wear by, she returns to the temple several times and their feelings grow stronger and stronger. Finally, both, within a period of hours, break down and confess to her the strength of their passions. O-Shino is horrified, for she had not realized the strength of the spells cast upon her. With her horror comes a growing sense of shame and anger at those who used her. Fleeing the Shrine, she hides herself away from her suitors. Anchin, broken, languishes in his cell, letting his body and spirit waste away. Kaian, however, begins to comb the city for her. The city gossips about the strange mystery of Anchin and the outrageous behavior of Kaian.

Meanwhile, Kigo and Bupposo decide that things have gone on long enough, that it is time to restore O-Shino and release the unfortunate monks. Knowing her hiding place, they summon O-Shino to return things as they were. She, however, has entirely different plans for Kigo and Bupposo. Taichi has offered her revenge, for reasons known only to him. Returning to the Winter Sect temple, she purposely reveals herself to Kigo and Bupposo and they too become infatuated with her. But she only mocks and scorns the two, driving them to despair. Taichi greatly enjoys the scene and with a single spell maddens them forever with passion. Then, knowing full well that O-Shino is too dangerous to remain as



she is, he lifts his spells from her, freeing Kaian and Anchin. As a final reward for her part in this amusing little drama, Taichi returns to O-Shino a small portion of that overpowering charm she held, making her a gracious lady, certain to fare well in the world.

*Player Character Involvement:* The story of O-Shino and her unfortunate suitors can be modified to involve the player characters based on their sex, more than their class. Female player characters can easily take the part of O-Shino, provided they can be persuaded. At this point all thoughts of revenge or mercy are left to the player characters and the plot may go in highly unexpected directions.

Male player characters can take on equal (though more unfortunate) roles. They could easily become the victims of Kogi and Bupposo—a challenging role-playing task! Again, the exact circumstances of the plot could change radically. Player characters are much more likely to go out and seek revenge on the merry pranksters themselves!

Furthermore, the escapades of Kogi, Bupposo and O-Shino need not end here. With such devious wits, Kogi and Bupposo can certainly devise other entertaining schemes to keep life from getting dull! Furthermore, O-Shino may decide to remain as she is, using her “charms” to exact an unrelenting price on all men.

## E. The Mountain of Virtue

*The Plot:* Kidera Takeshi is placed in a difficult position by the need to honor his obligations and his duty to his lord. A longtime supporter of the Goshukara comes to him seeking aid and shelter. Normally such a man would be turned away, but this one is Ueda Teishi, a man from Takeshi’s past. Takeshi must choose between loyalty to his lord and loyalty to his family traditions.

*The Actors:* Kidera Takeshi, Ueda Teishi, Tsuga Mosuke

*The Story:* Kidera Takeshi has always lived for the honor of his family. All his life he has striven to perfect every noble quality. He is hard on himself and equally unrelenting on his sons, demanding the entire household be a model of tradition. For this he is called “The Mountain of Virtue”, great and powerful, hard and immovable.

Takeshi’s life has always been straightforward. He serves his lord and trains his sons. There is little else that needs to be in his life, only his garden and his meditation. There is little time for anything else. He has no particular political ambitions for himself, thinking instead of the advantages his sons can gain. With discretion and care, he will manage to avoid having his family destroyed by the schemes of others. But, with the arrival of Ueda Teishi, all this may change.

Thirty-five years ago, in a minor skirmish so insignificant it is not recorded in the chronicles of the time, the youthful Kidera Takeshi was struck from his horse and encircled by his foes. It was then that a samurai named Ueda Umaki leapt from his horse while at full gallop and sprang into their midst. Clearly superior to all others, Umaki rescued the fallen Takeshi and saw him to safety, thereby performing a deed of valor remembered ever since by Takeshi. Since that time the ways of the Kidera and Ueda have drifted apart and the brave man Umaki has died. He is survived by his son, Teishi.

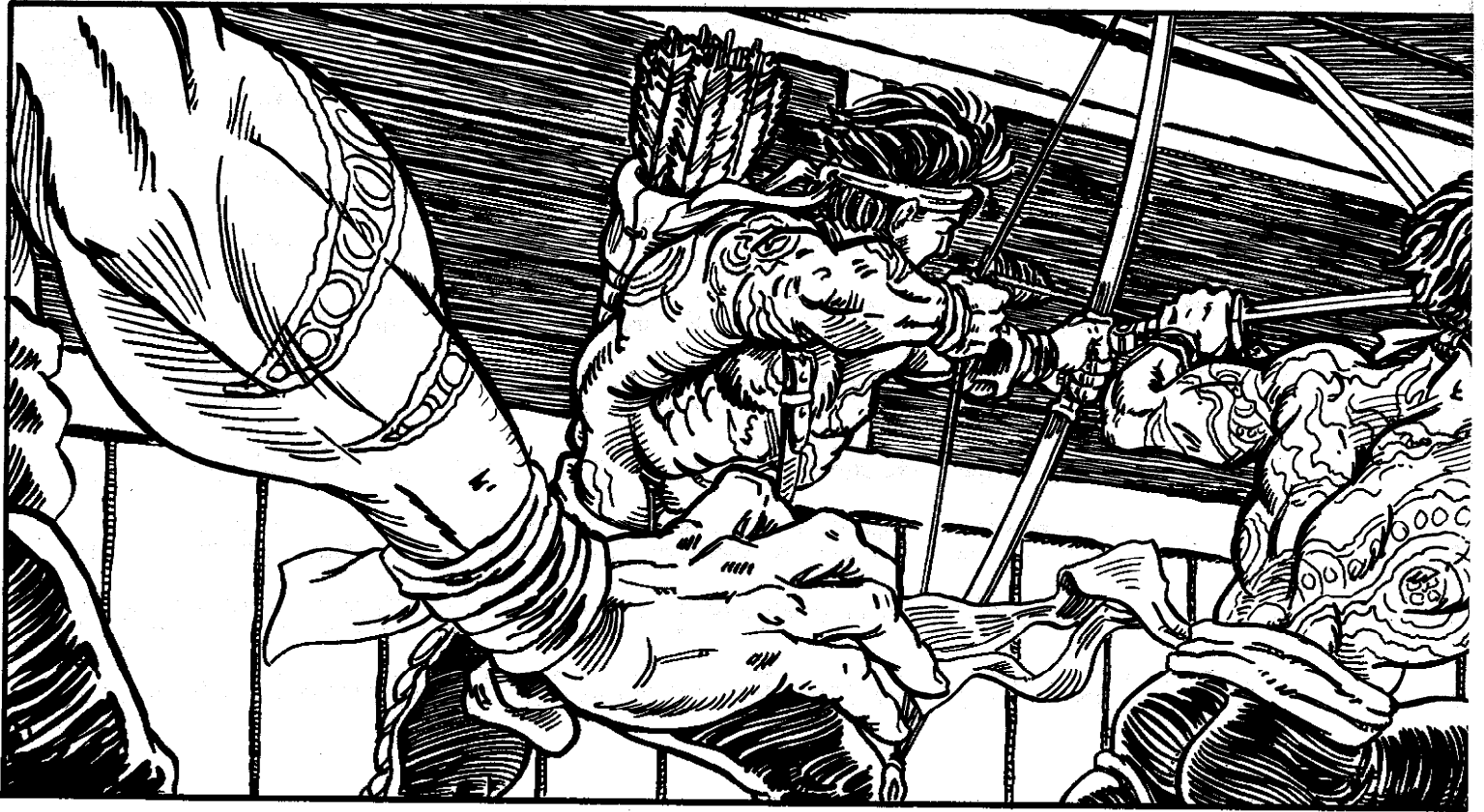
Unfortunately, Teishi is neither as heroic or as clever as his father. For several years he has made foolish and indiscreet comments about the Funadas and the shogun. Most went unreported or ignored, but just recently, Teishi simply became too vocal about his distastes. Rumors began to grow about his associations with the Goshukara. Now, he risks being banned from the province. Should this happen, all who harbor him would be subject to death. But, there are old scores he must settle. For honor, he must destroy those who spread

rumors against him. It is the only proper thing to do. But, it is something he cannot do alone and for aid he has come to Kidera Takeshi.

But for Takeshi the situation is not so simple. The man Teishi must strike against is Tsuga Mosuke, youthful pillar of the Tsuga family. The Tsuga are retainers of the Funada, particularly strong supporters of Toyoo. Takeshi is torn between his desire to serve Toyoo and his need to fulfill the debt he owes Teishi. To his mind, there is only one solution, although it will certainly mean his downfall and death. Takeshi must assist Teishi to reach Mosuke and confront him in a duel. If necessary, he must even aid Teishi in striking down Mosuke. When this is done, he must present himself to Funada Toyoo for judgment, for in striking down Mosuke he has raised his hand against his lord. There is no question in his mind that Toyoo will order his death. Indeed, at that point Toyoo will be as trapped as he is now. Toyoo must pass the sentence to satisfy the Tsuga. If Takeshi is lucky, Toyoo will be lenient and only grant the Tsuga permission to carry out a vendetta against Teishi and himself.

The choice is one that Takeshi cannot hope to win, but it is unthinkable for him that there be any other course. All his life he has acted as the “Mountain of Virtue.” He cannot change now. Should he refuse Teishi, his personal honor and that of his family would be dragged down, disgraced. This cannot be allowed and so only the grim alternative remains.

But not everyone in the family is pleased with Takeshi’s decision. In particular, his youngest son seeks some way to prevent what seems to be inevitable. If Teishi were forced to flee or slain, the problem could be solved. If banned, Takeshi could discharge his obligation by helping Teishi escape. It would be a risk for the family, but, if undiscovered, could solve the problem. Even better, if Teishi were slain by bravos or thugs, Takeshi would not need to confront



Mosuke. Instead, he could request and almost certainly receive permission to hunt down Teishi's killers. Again, this would fulfill the obligation he owes Teishi. Thus he has begun searching Nakamaru for someone willing to carry out his schemes.

Meanwhile, to fulfill his obligation, Takeshi arranges a meeting between him and Mosuke at a teahouse in the entertainment district. It is there that Teishi will confront his enemy with Takeshi at his side. There will be a swift and bloody duel and Teishi's honor will be avenged. But the end will have begun for Takeshi.

*Player Character Involvement:* This plot is specifically designed to give the player characters a direct role. However, you (playing the part of Takeshi's son) must convince them to act. If you are successful, the player characters will suddenly find themselves in a deeper web of duplicity as Takeshi and his sons seek to avenge the death of Teishi by killing the player characters. The only way the player characters can escape this fate is to

reveal and prove the role of Takeshi's son in the whole affair. Any other action will only lead to more deaths and vendettas.

## F. The Dark Father

*The Plot:* A creature of evil and darkness, a *tigbanua buso* has set on a course to destroy not just a person, but an entire city. Through its special powers, it is seeking to gain control of the Worthless Flower Gang, so that it can wreak its havoc throughout the city.

*The Actors:* Getsu, a *tigbanua buso*, Grandfather Uruma, *oyabun* of the *Worthless Flower yakuza*

*The Story:* Getsu is a creature of ancient age and great evil. Once a helper and aide to man, he long ago became perverted and foul, a relentless destroyer of man and his works. But unlike others of his kind, Getsu has been blessed (or cursed) with a mind, active and functioning far beyond the normal ranges in clever-

ness and cruelty. And the mind of this inhuman creature has found a plan to carry out his ravages on more than just a person or a family. His goal is no less than to destroy the entire city of Nakamaru!

Destroying Nakamaru is easy, at least to Getsu's mind. All he needs to do is infect enough of the population with the disease carried in his claws—the disease that transforms a man into a hideous *tagamaling buso*. Each *tagamaling* in turn will unknowingly carry out his plan, becoming raging creatures of death and horror. Soon, Nakamaru will be helpless before his horde of creatures.

For his plan, Getsu needs a vehicle, something that will allow him to spread his disease throughout the city. Ideally, it should allow him to reach all levels of society and move about freely. The *Worthless Flower yakuza* suits his needs perfectly.

His plan is simple. He will start by infecting the *oyabun*, Grandfather Uruma. From there he will work downward through the organization, affecting the sub-bosses and lieutenants





until he finally reaches the ranks of the kobun. With luck, he will control the entire gang before anyone realizes what has occurred. Then, since the Worthless Flower gang circulates throughout the city, he will use their power to infect samurai and commoners alike. By this time he boastfully feels he will be unstoppable.

But first, Getsu must reach Grandfather Uruma. This is no easy task, for Uruma is no fool. He knows his life is filled with enemies and takes great precautions to protect himself. Thus, Getsu must wait for an opportunity to strike. Some distraction must occur, something that will get Uruma to lower his guard. Getsu is patient, he can only wait so long.

The opportunity will finally occur and Getsu will strike. Alarms will be raised throughout the household as Getsu moves from room to room. He knows he cannot rely on a single scratch and so tries to infect as many as possible. In some the disease will take. His desire is not to kill and so after his attack he flees. Then he patiently waits and observes to see

what effect he has had. If unsuccessful in reaching or infecting Grandfather Uruma, he will attack again, attempting the same goal.

Once Uruma is infected, Getsu continues his ambitions, working through the sub-bosses and underlings. Always he waits for a distraction to improve his chances. The turmoil in the city provides many of these. At the same time he cannot resist infecting any who come across his path. This is his great weakness.

The activities of a tiganua buso are hard to conceal and almost never go unnoticed. Thus there have been increasing reports of strange attacks and bizarre creatures. Some of these are due to Getsu's activities, others are rumors and wild exaggerations. However, the attacks of the tagamaling buso are impossible to conceal, lacking Getsu's cleverness and caution. Thus, it is clear to authorities that something is happening.

The authorities react by increasing the watch in the affected areas and ordering a curfew. However, in these troubled times these laws and precau-

tions mean little. The citizens of the area need proper protections.

If the activities of Getsu are not discovered, he will reach his goal. It will take a long time, perhaps a year or more, and there are many potential setbacks along the way. But Getsu is virtually ageless and so a year or more is of little matter to him.

*Player Character Involvement:* It is clear that the player characters must take an active role in hunting down and destroying the tiganua and his creations. The intrigues of the city prevent the daimyo's men from taking an effective role in the search. Of course, Getsu is aware of the attempts to find him and will counter them by attacking his hunters, moving his base of operations frequently, and preparing final defenses against his attackers. Stopping him will not be easy, but should the characters fail, the price Nakamaru pays will be grim.



## G. The Waves of the Ocean

*The Plot:* A daughter of the Funada family has fallen madly, obsessively in love with a son of the Nagoya family. He, however, cares nothing for her, considering her little more than a plaything and toying with her affections. While the match would be advantageous (it would bind the Nagoya closer to the Funada), he has little desire to see it completed, dreaming of a greater and even more advantageous marriage someday. His ambitions and cruel affections may bring about the ruin of the poor girl and an irreparable rift between the two families.

*The Actors:* Sumi-ko, a daughter of Funada Toyoo, Nagoya Kenko, a son of Nagoya Hatano, Nagoya Hatano, Funada Toyoo, Funada Genzo

*The Story:* Sumi-ko is a fair and sheltered daughter of Lord Toyoo, only just now coming of age. Many years ago her father arranged that she marry the son of a neighboring daimyo, but then misfortune struck. In a childhood illness the son died and he had no brothers to fulfill the arrangement. Thus, unwittingly, she was released from the bonds of arranged marriage. Now her father, Toyoo, fearing she will become a spinster (at the age of 17), is searching for an advantageous marriage for the family. So far, he has not found the right arrangement.

To provide entertainment for the nobles of the local court, Mitsuhide has prepared a moon-viewing party. To this have been invited members of all the local refined samurai families, including Nagoya Hatano and his son Kenko. It is at this party that Sumi-ko first spies Kenko as he sits drinking in the garden with the other men. He is fair, graceful and witty and she is instantly taken by him. That night she spends watchful at the shoji screen, hoping to learn more of him. The few glimpses she catches convince her that he is the one she desires.

Nagoya Kenko, however, is a cad. Callous and vain, he has been pampered by his parents, given all the best they could afford and forgiven for every transgression. He has never learned to respect his parents or honor his family. In short, he considers his birth to the Nagoya a curse and punishment from the gods, absolutely certain that he is truly socially above them. He is completely bereft of a sense of morals, obligations, or duties. He is a handsome and well-bred swine.

After the moon-viewing party, Sumi-ko secretly sends a message to Kenko through her maid requesting she meet him. Thus begins a long series of secret meetings—an illicit romance. His vanity pleased by her attention, he is always gracious and loving, concealing his true nature. Still, he is positive he can make a better match than this, so sure that he has refused all marriage arrangements of his parents. They, browbeaten, have acceded to his whims. Thus, he passes the time toying with the love and affection of Sumi-ko.

However, their meetings have not gone unnoticed. Sumi-ko's maid has gossiped and this has come to the ears of Funada Genzo, Master of the Port. Protective of the reputation of the Funada family and watchful over his sister (though by a different mother), Genzo and a few of his closest advisors pay a "pleasant" visit to Kenko. They know full well the youth's reputation. Hooded, they demand to learn his intentions. His response is to mock them and their precautions. He knows they dare not expose his meetings unless they want shame brought down upon the Funada. Thus he brazenly refuses to end his affair. A fight ensues, and Genzo barely manages to escape with his life. The line of hatred between the two is implacably drawn.

The next morning Genzo receives a warning of his own. In a curt note sent by messenger, Kenko warns him to avoid further involvement in the mat-

ter lest all come to light. He realizes that he cannot directly intervene. Attempts to dissuade his sister are useless. Genzo has decided to hire men to drive the worthless Kenko out of town, or, failing that, he will buy the man off. However no hint of what has happened must ever reach his father.

Sumi-ko, for her part, has come to realize that Kenko does not share her affection. Distraught, she has asked her personal maid to help realize some solution. The maid Cho has sought out the services of a fortune-teller and wu jen. She has prepared charms to ensure the affections of the wayward Kenko, they are however ineffective. Not realizing this, Sumi-ko has staked all her hopes upon these. So deluded, she is indiscreet and the affair is exposed to her father and all of the city. Heartless to the end, Nagoya Kenko flees the city, abandoning Sumi-ko for all to see in shame. Sumi-ko, her dreams shattered, loses grip on herself and flees into the wilderness in maddened pursuit of a lover she will never again find.

*Player Character Involvement:* The exact involvement of the player characters will depend greatly on their social position and loyalties. Supporters of the Funada may find themselves aiding Genzo in his attempts to deal with Kenko, perhaps even to the point of carrying out extreme measures. However, killing Kenko will certainly create political difficulties for the Funada and will bring about a vendetta on the player characters. Other options are possible—shanghaiing Kenko and shipping him out, buying him off, seeing that his infamy is revealed to his father, Nagoya Hatano. Other player characters may become involved from Sumi-ko's end, perhaps trying to persuade her to see the truth or even using magical means to prevent the disaster. Finally, player characters, if all other methods have failed, can assist the Funada in the search for Sumi-ko when she flees into the surrounding countryside.



## H. The Birth of Tora-san

*The Plot:* Using the happy occurrence of a birth, Gorath, the true power behind the Royal Vagabonds, plans to discover the location of his old enemy Lui-hsia Chih. Once he has found him, he will personally see to the destruction of the Many Hued Peacock society.

*Actors:* Gorath, a *men-shen* (see end of module), Lui-hsia Chih, leader of the Many Hued Peacock Society, Yin-kung T'o, Royal Vagabond leader, Yen-ch'eng Tzu Yu, a *wu jen*, Nan-kuo, a monk, Royal Vagabond men

*The Story:* Goshukara Sadamoto's first wife has given birth to her third son, a healthy strapping boy. As is the custom, messengers have been sent to announce the birth to the important folk of Nakamaru. Sadamoto, crafty and political as ever, has neglected no possible ally. Thus, he has even sent notice to the important merchants of the Foreign District. Among these are Yin-kung T'o and Lui-hsia Chih, leaders of the two foreign factions in the city. However, neither man has met the other, nor are their secret roles known. However, Gorath, that mysterious agent of the emperor, has learned through Yin-kung T'o of the invitation. He knows that his quarry, Lui-hsia Chih, has certainly been invited. Although he does not know what Chih looks like now, he is positive he could spot the old imposter Chih by his aura. Thus, magically transforming his appearance, he takes the place of Yin-kung T'o. Taking a suitable gift (rice and eggs wrapped in delicate imported clothes), Gorath visits the proud family.

As Gorath expected, Lui-hsia Chih arrives with his present. And, as expected, Gorath was able to detect the aura of his foe. Noting the man carefully, he did nothing to reveal himself. Yet when Gorath approached the child, the little boy sensed what he

was and began crying. Gorath considered the incident minor and withdrew confident of his charade.

However, the child's cries had been noted by Lui-hsia Chih. Knowing the perspicacity of innocents, Chih notes the visitors of the moment. Most are relations and friends of the family, but among them is Yin-kung T'o. This, to Lui-hsia Chih, is clearly significant and he resolves to immediately investigate the matter.

Upon returning to T'o's compound, Gorath resumes his natural form and begins to plan his destruction of Lui-hsia Chih. Chih meanwhile calls the secret society to a special meeting. He knows that if Gorath has found him he has little time. From among his members, he orders two with special talents, the *wu jen* Yench'eng Tzu Yu and the monk Nan-kuo, to go to the house of Yin-kung T'o and secretly read his aura. This they manage to do by devising a simple subterfuge to conceal their purpose. The reading, however, is not unusual (or at least not what Chih expected). T'o is clearly a normal man, not some being in disguise.

This only succeeds in unnerving Chih. He is convinced his suspicions that Gorath has found him are true and cannot accept that T'o is a normal man. Unable to prove his belief, he is plagued by the fear that Gorath has outwitted him. Still, he has not survived his enemy for centuries through cowardice. Reacting to his fears, he orders the best members of the Many Hued Peacock Society to remain the night and stand guard. As darkness falls he retires to his room and magically calls the members of the Inner Council to warn them of his peril.

It is just at this moment that Gorath and the Royal Vagabonds attack. Anticipating an unsuspecting target, the Royal Vagabonds overconfidently blunder into the guards Chih has posted. A violent night battle erupts with neither side giving or gaining ground. The advantage of greater numbers the Royal Vagabonds possessed was

lost to the trap of the Many Hued Peacocks. On each side men fall.

Gorath, unlike the puny men, knows that its prey is watchful and clever. Simple human guards do not deter it. The beast bypasses or disposes of them with ease. Likewise, so close to the goal, it has no concern for those it is meant to serve and abandons them to their fate. Crashing through the screen of Chih's room, it bursts upon the magical meeting of the Inner Council. With a scream of satisfaction Gorath hurls itself across the chamber, blue energies crackling between its talons. Wheeling, Chih and the Inner Council screech out a spell...

From the outside, it seems that the center of the mansion erupts in a surge of blue and gold fire. The blast peels the roof away and sweeps the outer pillars aside. The many shoji screens flash and crumble to powder. With a squealing grind, a glowing ball flashes over the compound and dissipates. A wave of bone-numbing cold follows. When the wreckage is searched, no sign is found of Lui-hsia Chih or the creature Gorath.

*Player Character Involvement:* Foreign characters can become involved in this plot right from the outset, either as supporters of the Many Hued Peacock Society or members of the Royal Vagabonds. Beside the specific actions mentioned here, there can also be scouting missions on both sides in preparation for the final battle. It is even possible that player characters may be able to affect the outcome of the climactic encounter between Gorath and Chih. Player characters who are not part of the foreign community can still become involved in the final battle. Watchmen will surely arrive on the scene shortly after the battle begins. Yakuza, who always have their eyes everywhere, will learn of the movements in even before the battle begins. Other characters can be introduced to the situation as needed.

# Events



Events are the key to all the schemes and plots of the different factions on Nakamaru. Events are the action, the mechanics that keep each story going. They set the stage for direct player character involvement and participation.

The Dungeon Master must choose the sequence and timing of the different events. While the sequence within any given plot is already set, multiple plots require certain decisions. Should the big battle scene come before the personal duel? Should there be time for investigation in-between the two? You must decide the pacing of this adventure.

Pacing is more than just “Are their spells recovered; are their wounds healed?” Several factors should be considered when pacing an adventure.

1. How much playing time is left in this particular session? Obviously, if the game must break up soon, you do not want to start a big battle. But at the same time, you do not want the night

to end on a flat note. Try to make sure that each night ends interestingly. This may be a big fight, a surprise attack, a mysterious visit or offer of aid, or an unsolved puzzle. Be sure that all player characters are involved at the end. You do not want any players leaving while the others wrap things up. In adventures full of intrigue such as these, ending the night with a mystery is particularly effective. It will give the players something to ponder over until the next session.

2. What is the physical state of the characters? Clearly you do not want the player characters hopelessly defeated because you didn’t allow them any time between different events. At the same time, you do not want to always give them the chance to recover fully before the next event is played. The tensest and most exciting encounters are those that push the player characters to the limits of their abilities, without necessarily throwing them over.

3. What are the player characters doing? This is the most important part of pacing adventures such as these. The plots only cover the actions of the non-player characters with no allowances for anything else. However, your player characters could change things drastically. You *MUST* be very flexible when following the plots. Do not hesitate to change the order of events, skip events or create new ones. Personalize your adventure and your group will have even more fun.

## Random Events and Encounters

Since Nakamaru is a fairly large city, not every person the player characters will meet or every possible incident can be described in detail. Thus, a random encounter table and random events table are provided. The random encounter table provides a sampling of non-player characters likely to be met on the streets in different districts of the



city. Little information is provided about these encounters. As DM you will have to provide most of the information about the encounter.

Random events are little incidents and scenes, also played out in the streets. Each of these has the potential for player character involvement. The scenes do not particularly further the action of any of the plots, but can sometimes provide complication, amusement, and excitement to the player characters' lives.

Unlike many random tables, neither table is checked at any particular time—you do NOT make a random encounter check once every ten turns, for example. Use the random table when you see fit and only when you see fit. Do not let the dice or the players bully you into encounters and events you do not want to use. The tables are your tool—to provide a quick answer to a simple question or a bit of action in a dull moment of the game. Do not let the tool get the better of you.

Random Encounter Table

District/Die		Roll					Encounter
Cas d10	Sam d12	Mar d20	Ent d12	Wat d12	Eta d6	For d12	
1	1	1	-	1	1	1	Child
-	-	2	1	-	2	2	Clerk
2	2	3	2	-	-	-	Courtesan
-	-	4	-	2	-	-	Craftsman
-	-	5	-	3	2	-	Farmer
-	-	6	-	4	-	-	Grocer
-	-	7	-	5	3	3	Laborer
-	3	8	3	6	-	4	Mercenary
-	-	10	4	-	-	5	Merchant
3	4	11	5	-	-	6	Messenger
4	5	12	-	-	-	-	Monk
5	6	-	6	-	-	-	Musician
-	-	13	-	7	4	7	Peddler
-	-	14	7	8	-	8	Sailor
6	7	-	8	-	-	-	Samurai, high
7	8	15	9	-	-	-	Samurai, low
8	9	16	-	-	-	-	Shukenja
-	-	17	-	9	-	9	Traveler
9	10	-	-	-	-	10	Tutor
-	11	18	10	10	-	11	Watchman
10	12	19	11	11	5	12	Woman
-	-	209	12	12	6	-	Yakuza



Random Event Table

District/Die	Roll	Mar	Ent	For	Wat	Eta	Event
Sam	Cas						
d6	d4	d8	d8	d6	d6	d6	
-	-	19	-	1	-	-	Urchin
1	-	2	1	2	1	1	Fire!
2	1	-	2	-	2	-	Duel
-	-	-	3	-	3	2	Gambling
3	2	3	4	3	4	3	Spirit
-	-	4	5	-	-	4	Dead-beat
4	3	5	-	4	-	-	Palanquin
-	-	6	6	-	-	-	Pickpocket
5	4	-	7	5	-	-	Assignment
6	-	7	8	6	5	5	Quarrel
-	-	8	-	-	6	6	Beggar

### Random Encounters

**Urchin:** A small youth, his or her clothes filthy and torn, comes rushing out of a small shop, the owner in hot pursuit. Grabbing the child by the hair, he begins to beat the child while berating it for some petty theft. The child screams and howls. If the characters do nothing, the owner will eventually force the child to give up some stolen trinket and leave, uttering dire threats should the youth ever return. If the player characters intervene, his reaction will vary according to their apparent station. If they seem no higher than him, he will brusquely tell them to mind their own business. However, if they are higher, he will cease and protest his case. The urchin has stolen from him, after all. If the goods can be returned and the merchant is assured the youth will be dealt with properly, he will stomp off. He is not a warrior and will automatically cease if threatened with arms. He will be no friend of the player characters, however.

The youth, boy or girl, if rescued proves to be bright, audacious, and cheerful. He or she is a fountain of knowledge about the district and can be a very useful guide. However, the player characters will find it virtually impossible to get rid of the child, who will have a disconcerting ability to turn up at the most amazing moments. Properly used, the urchin can become a loyal and entertaining sidekick of the

player characters (as is common in lots of B grade movies).

**Fire!** One of the most dreaded occurrences of Nakamaru (or any city made entirely of wood) has just occurred—fire! In the next street over are billowing waves of grey smoke! A blaze has started. Alarms are hammered and the locals are running to the scene. The player characters are pushed and shoved in that direction as it is expected that all will do their part. The characters can attempt to slip away (at the loss of 1 honor point for samurai characters) or they can stay and help. Helping fight the fire will take several hours and involves carrying water, pulling down neighboring buildings, shoveling, etc.

Trapped in the blaze are 2-3 people. If the player characters attempt a rescue, they must enter the burning building and search. Each round spent searching allows the player character to make an ability check against wisdom. Success means the character has found a victim. For each round spent in the blaze, the character automatically suffers 1-10 points of damage. There is also a 10% cumulative chance the character's clothes will catch fire (causing an additional 2-12 points per round for three rounds). Characters can shed burning clothes while in the fire, but cannot put the

burning cloth out until outside again. Clearly, the family the character rescues will be friendly to the character thereafter.

**Duel:** The player characters encounter a violent confrontation between two warriors. The rank of the duelers will depend on the district. In the Samurai district, they will be samurai or bushi retainers of different lords of some note and importance. The duel, while not a formal affair, will be fought with the proper regard to honorable conduct. The duelists will announce themselves (and their ancestry) and state their grievances. Friends of the duelists (including the player characters) can join either side, but must state their intention from the start. Entering into the fight after the duel has begun would be dishonorable, both for the one who entered late and for the duelist one wants to aid.

A duel in the castle would be conducted with the same degree of formality, except that the guards will intervene—to the death if necessary. The duelists will accept surrender, which can be done without the massive loss of honor since it is bowing to the authority of one's lord. However, drawing a sword against another in the castle is a serious offense, dishonorable in itself (since it shows a lack of control) and subject to severe penalty.

In the entertainment and waterfront districts, the duel could involve virtually any player character type (although it is not likely that wu jen or shukenja will be involved). For a samurai (or bushi with social ambitions), the duel will retain the formality described previously. Certainly a crowd will watch the battle from hiding, none wanting to get too close to madmen with drawn weapons!

Duels between yakuza are even more chaotic affairs. They usually consist of a yakuza of one gang accidentally meeting another in the street (one will typically be a Black Mist member). There are no formal rules to such a meeting, although the person-





al honor of the yakuza may cause him to refuse any aid. Sohei duels are inter-temple affairs and the aid of non-sohei is not appreciated. Likewise, kensai duels are tests of skill and no outside help will be tolerated. Ninja duels, while extremely rare, are the most dangerous as the combatants have no regard for the safety of any others and do not fight by any rules at all.

If a duel involves any family member or relative of higher rank than a player character, it is expected that his family will conduct a vendetta to exact revenge. Vendettas have formal laws, and if conducted according to these laws, are perfectly legal. First, a vendetta can only be carried out by a relative of lower rank than the person killed. A character could avenge the death of an older brother, or father, but not for a younger brother. Second, the killer must be known. Before taking up a vendetta, the character must be able to name and identify the killer or killers. Finally, upon locating the killer, the character must have the permission of the local lord. Many a killer has avoided a vendetta by fleeing to the province of his own lord. There, his services valued, he is protected by the daimyo. There is little the avenger can do but wait for his victim to enter another province where permission will be granted. Thus, some resort to all types of subterfuge to lure their targets beyond the confines of safety.

**Gambling:** The player characters come across a game of cards or dice, being run by a Worthless Flower or Black Mist yakuza. This in itself may create trouble if there is a yakuza of another gang in the party. There will be 1-3 yakuza and 5-10 customers. If the game is honest, the player characters will win on a die roll of 12 or greater. Each bettor must roll separately. Winnings are paid on a 1 for 1 basis. If the game is crooked, the players win on a die roll of 14 or greater on a d20. Of course, the game may not

be open to all characters due to social status. Games in the entertainment district may be very restricted. Those in other areas are not likely to be very picky. Of course, the player characters may consider those at the game below their station.

**Spirit:** A strange, mysterious, and possibly deadly creature has appeared in the district. This event can be a simple monster combat or a more involved mystery. The creature can be a marauder, seeking to cause destruction, or a helpful guide that has appeared to give the player characters some mysterious advice. Obviously, you can select any creature you desire or you can roll again on the following table.

1: 4-20 bakemono making a nighttime raid.

2: Hu Hsien attempts to seduce one of the player characters.

3: A lu nat has settled among the tombs of a nearby temple.

4: A lesser nature spirit appears. If properly approached, it will provide good advice.

5: 1-4 jiki-niku-gaki are terrorizing a block of the city.

6: 1 jiki-ketsu-gaki and 3 jiki-niku-gaki have taken up residence in an old inn. There they prey on foolish travelers who arrive late at night.

Clearly, encounters with spirits could result in mini-adventures of their own.

**The Deadbeat:** While the player characters are in the street, they are approached by a servant at a local tea shop, drinking house, inn, noodle shop, etc. The servant has been sent by his or her master to find some hardy types who might want to earn a little cash (meal or whatever). The master has a troublesome deadbeat customer that needs to be taught a lesson by having the player characters perhaps pick a quarrel and then throw the bum out.

The troublesome deadbeat is an easily irritated man and will resist any attempts by the player characters to remove him. At your choice he could be a drunken barbarian, a cantankerous old wu jen, a noble shukenja (who has been cheated by the shop owner), or a powerful samurai traveling in disguise. In any case, he will prove quite a problem to remove, more than the player characters bargained for.

**Palanquin:** A noble procession passes down the street. A herald comes first to clear the street. After this comes a small group of bodyguards, followed by the palanquin (*kago*), borne by two men. A few servants and a second group of guards follow. The procession has 20 persons in all. Those of lesser status are expected to clear the way without argument, while the self will yield to those of higher rank. The greatest difficulty comes when the procession meets another of equal ranking. Then neither group cares to yield the way, as it is an issue of some pride.

Furthermore, riding in the palanquin is a young woman of exceptional beauty. She will discreetly flirt with one of the more striking player characters and if possible have a maid deliver a message, suggesting a rendezvous. The exact rank and position of the lady is left for you to decide as best fits the situation of the campaign.

**Pickpocket:** A yakuza of 5th to 8th level attempts to relieve one of the player characters of his burdensome possessions. A skillful fellow, he will only make his move when the characters are appropriately distracted by some other event. He will trail them waiting for the best opportunity and will observe them, choosing the best (richest) target. Of course, watchful player characters may notice the yakuza following them. He will continue his observation for half a day or until he learns where they are staying. In the latter case, he will return some



other time to rob their rooms while they are gone.

*Assignment:* One or more of the player characters receives a message to attend a secret meeting. This meeting could be with a secret admirer, with a secret society the player characters are trying to contact, with someone seeking to do them harm, etc. Note that since this event revolves around the situation in your campaign and requires more than normal preparation on your part, you may not want to use it if it is randomly rolled. However, since the event does allow you to involve player characters in the plots of the city, provide them information when they are stuck, and generally keep a story going, it is a useful tool to have at your disposal.

*Quarrel:* The player characters blunder into a domestic or business argument. In the common districts, this is likely to be an overbearing husband cruelly berating his wife or an enraged shopkeeper yelling at a servant where all the neighbors can hear. The man's rage is intense and he has lost all sense of propriety. His wife or servant is in tears and is clearly trying only to escape his savage rage, but he will not allow it. If left unchecked, it seems that he will become violent and may do great harm. If the player characters intervene, they will be able to restrain him. However, they will also have publicly shamed him. The wife or servant, while grateful to the characters, will urge them not to interfere. The master or husband will thereafter hate the player characters and if he is in any position of influence will attempt to cause them any harm he can, even if only to ruin their credit or spread unpleasant rumors about them. Of course, there may be little he can do.

In the more noble districts, all of the events above can occur, although in not quite such an obvious fashion. Should the player characters intervene, they will earn a lifelong and bitter enemy. If of sufficient position, he

may be able to cause them severe harm.

Business arguments can also occur between commoners, such as two shopowners. While these are mostly comical and noisy, they sometimes burst into comical violence. If the player characters intervene, they can gain favors and special treatment from the merchant they protect, although they cannot expect the same from the other fellow!

*Beggar:* A poor mendicant is on the street, asking for the charity of others. Of course, this being a fantasy world, player characters can never be sure if he is what he seems. That poor, old beggar might only be a beggar, but he might also be a wise man who can provide advice to the kind and generous, a ninja sent to spy, a powerful spirit testing the goodness of the citizens of Nakamaru, a noble samurai curious about the conditions of the common folk, or a master kensai devoted to a life of simplicity and frugality. While these are very rare occurrences, they should happen every once in a while to encourage the player characters to pay attention to such simple events.

## Plot Events

The following, unlike random events, are those that occur at set times and places and complement one or more of the plots described previously. These events describe the setting, including descriptions you can read to the players (or adapt to your needs), the NPCs and forces involved, and the probable tactics (or actions) that will be used.

Not every event that is described in the plot section can be detailed. Those given here provide examples of how to create different types of events for the various plots, in particular swordfights and battle scenes. Further events can be constructed from the materials in the NPC booklet.

### 1. The Festival at the Shrine

This event, the trigger for much of the action to come, takes place just outside the *torii* of a small neighborhood shrine in the Market District, in one of the quieter wards of that area. It is the day of a local festival and the enterprising members of the Big Head gang have organized a small collection of street stalls, entertainers, and charlatans to milk the crowd.

The afternoon has been wet and humid for a late spring day. The sky has been free of rain, but the branches of the trees drip with dew and small muddy patches dot the narrow street. A faint breeze flaps the bright red and blue banners of the merchants and spins the lanterns of the sake sellers. The crowd is thin, but cheerful and merry.

At the entrance to the shrine stand two shukenja, keeping the hawkers outside the actual grounds. Their brows are beaded with sweat and their red and gold robes hang damply from their shoulders. They give a gentle wave of their tasseled wands as each supplicant enters the shrine. Further down the street from them is a medicine peddler, his portable chest of powders and infusions opened before him. His monkey, a symbol of his calling, clings to his jacket and greedily eats a plum, the juice soaking its little white beard. Thumping a tinny drum, the old man drones on about his wares, attempting to drown out the calls of his neighbors.

One neighbor, his goods spread out on mats, sells envelopes. Another sells fortunes printed on slips of paper. A small bush nearby is festooned with knotted fortunes of those who wish to leave their bad luck behind. Further down the street are the boisterous stalls of sake dealers. The owners scurry



about, scooping up wooden measures of sake, plopping a hefty draft and a measure of salt before eager customers. Through the crowd wander other peddlers, their goods piled high on their backs—fabric and pots and kettles and bonsai and charms and more—all guaranteed pretty but worthless. Through all this peek and probe the small crowd of men and women, little children scampering between the legs of all.

All told, there are five members of the Big Head gang working as peddlers at the festival. Two are first level yakuza and two are second level. Their activities are supervised by a 4th level yakuza. In addition, there are two more members of the Big Head gang, both 5th level yakuza, collecting rent from the ten other merchants (who are not associated with the Big Head gang in any way). There are 45 men, women and children who form the crowd of customers here. The two shukenja at the entrance to the shrine are both 3rd level. All told, there are 62 people on the scene.

While the turnout for the festival has not been amazing, the day has been good for the Big Heads. They have gained a reasonable profit for their efforts and have even managed a bit of gambling behind one of the sake stalls (which is technically the province of the Worthless Flower gang). It is this profit that the Black Mist gang has heard about and intends to move in on.

When the Black Mist arrive, they come in force. There are ten of them, led by a 7th level yakuza. Under him are one 4th level yakuza, two 3rd level yakuza, three 2nd levels and three 1st levels. They show up in small batches of twos and threes and position themselves along the length of the street. When their leader arrives, he begins pressuring the local merchants. This does not go unnoticed by the Big Heads and several of them move to

intercept him and give him a “polite” warning to stay out of their business.

This is what the rest of the Black Mist have been awaiting. Seeing the Big Heads (whom they have already marked) approach their leader, they cast off their jackets to reveal their tattoos and whip out short swords and daggers from the folds of their clothing. With a shout, they leap to the defense of their leader. Stationed as they are throughout the crowd, they are able to intercept most of the Big Heads closing in on the fight. Furthermore, the Big Heads are taken by surprise and waste at least one round getting weapons out. Not intending a fight, they are not as well-prepared as the Black Mist gang and only carry knives.

As people flee the street, the conflict quickly erupts into a battle. Stalls crash down and in the end, several members of the Big Heads are sprawled on the ground. Out-numbered and out-fought, the rest flee, leaving the street in the hands of the Black Mist yakuza. The latter freely takes what they want of all that is left behind and grotesquely arrange the bodies of the fallen Big Heads. Approximately an hour after the fight, they leave. The city watchmen never appear on the scene.

## 2. The Big Head Counterattack

Pushed on by the outrage at the shrine, the hothead elements of the Big Heads, led by Kura, stage a nighttime attack on the headquarters of the Black Mist yakuza. This, the oyabun's house, is located on the edge of the Foreign District. The house is naturally well guarded and, unless there is some outside intervention, the attack is a disaster.

The street to the oyabun's house is narrow and dark. There are no watchmen in sight. Along one side of the street is a narrow gate, lit by a pair of torches. Faded paper lan-

terns highlight shop entrances on the other side of the street. A dog sniffs around the corner at the end

However courageous the hot-tempered Big Head faction may be, they are sorely lacking in skills. Their concept of the Black Mist lacks all sense of subtlety and surprise. Led by Kura (yakuza 8th level), the 30 members of his group (five 4th level, ten 2nd level, and fifteen 1st level) march to the gates of the compound and shout out a challenge to those within. This has the desired effect but also gives those inside plenty of time to prepare. After fifteen minutes of shouted threats, the gates open. There in the entrance are fifty of the Black Mist *gurentai* (3rd level yakuza) armed with swords and spears. The foolish Big Heads charge and the Black Mist set to receive them.

Foolish as this tactic is, the Big Heads do even worse. Attempting to force their way into the yard, several members hurl lighted lanterns onto the roofs. Certainly, they reason, the Black Mist will have to send some of their men to deal with this threat. The Black Mist ignore the fire, leaving the servants to deal with the blaze. Several die in the flames before the fire is brought under control.

However, it is the fire that ultimately saves the Big Heads. The threat to the surrounding buildings alerts the neighborhood and the alarm bells are rung. Both sides break off the fight. By the time the battle ends, the Big Heads have lost 17 men and have had another 10 wounded while the Black Mist have only lost eight men and had seven more wounded.

Clearly, the disaster could have been prevented if the Big Heads had better guidance. They made no attempt to maneuver or achieve surprise. With stronger leadership, they might have been able to out-fight their enemy, but allowing themselves to be trapped in the gate against superior



odds was sheer foolishness.

### 3. The Moon-Viewing Party

Part of the court life is an endless series of social obligations—prettily concocted but painfully refined. There is no opportunity to escape these formalities and everyone is expected to take part in them. Those who cannot, through lack of desire or, for some occasions, skill are the objects of ridicule and low respect.

The garden of the lord's palace is brightly lit by lanterns, the walks sparkling in the dark night. Bodyguards and servants lurk in the shadows. A special platform has been set up and covered with mats. Low tables and small braziers for grilled meats and warmed drinks have been set out.

The moon-viewing party begins in the late evening and continues until nearly dawn. Attending it are the Funada brothers, the Goshukara, the heads and respected members of the Loyal Families, and a few other samurai families. All told, there are fifteen people at the party.

A function such as this offers several entertainments other than just watching the glory of the rising moon. There are musicians and story-tellers. There is eating and drinking. There are events that also involve the participants directly.

Drinking is a natural part of the moon-viewing party, especially potent drinks. Player characters must take care to exercise moderation. Such parties are extremely delicate affairs, bound by rules of etiquette. Characters who drink to excess should be required to make an ability check against their wisdom. This die roll can be modified if the DM wishes. If the ability check has failed, the player character has managed to say or do something particularly offensive and rude in front of one of the other attendees. The character may have forgot-

ten the proper title or made some slight about an ancestor of the family. There are many ways characters can get into trouble.

In addition, there are also impromptu contests held at the party—expected by the guests. Principal of these are a poetry contest and a calligraphy contest. All are expected to participate as refusal would open the character to humiliation and mockery in the days and weeks to come.

**The Poetry Contest:** Warmed by drink and the pleasant evening atmosphere, the host proposes a poetry composition contest using linked verse. This is a popular form of refined entertainment. The host begins the contest by preparing a couplet describing the beauty of the evening. The next guest adds a rhyming couplet that continues the verse and the sentiment. This continues until all the guests have added a couplet, changing and expanding the poem's original intention. If your player's have the talent, they can provide actual couplets as their entries, creating their own linked verse.

While prizes are not given for this contest, and judging is informal, all the other guests will be listening to each effort. Thus, the performance of the player character's should be determined according to the rules. If a player character refuses to participate, there will be a titter of surprise and an arched eyebrow, but nothing more will be said at the time. However, the next day and in the weeks thereafter the character will be mocked among the social circles of Nakamaru and will earn a particularly unflattering nickname. It may even be that allusions to the character (puns) will appear in popular songs or poems. These will gain a wide circulation throughout the city. The player character will retain this unenviable position for several weeks or until some new event captures the public attention.

If a player character makes a hor-

rendously botched attempt at a poem, the result will be even worse than if he had never tried. Not only will the character become the mockery of the city in the days that follow, the other guests will barely suppress their laughter at the moment. The player character will lose two points of honor immediately and will have earned a blot upon his name for weeks, months, or, if truly unfortunate, years to come.

The calligraphy contest is a different matter. While all refined persons are expected to have a fine hand, the contest is really only a test of skill between those who are masters of this demanding art. Any player character can choose to enter (with the consequences of failure described above) in hopes of gaining honor and influence. Each entrant writes out a section of the linked verse just composed. The finished writings are passed from hand to hand, receiving comments from the onlookers. The final winner is chosen by agreement. Of course, the choice of paper and skill of execution are all vital factors in the judging.

The moon-viewing party is also more than a simple social function. It is a time when much of the real business of ruling Nakamaru is conducted. Various lords and factions will use the party to sound out potential allies, make truces, arrange weddings, reach understandings, propose deals and offer terms. As such, the player characters should be encouraged to mingle and circulate. Likewise, non-player characters may seek out the characters for these purposes. When preparing for this event, it is helpful to have a list of whom the player characters may be trying to contact and who may be trying to make a deal with them.

### 4. The Death of Jirozu

This event occurs late in the night (past midnight) just beyond the outer gates of the castle. The attack will only happen once Jirozu's party is clearly



on Funada property.

The night is dark and the movements of the group have been cloaked in silence and secrecy. Taking a roundabout route, the bodyguards, dressed in simple dark robes, met Jirozu and led him back to the Funada palace. Ahead of the group has slunk a dark clad, silent figure—a ninja of the Hino clan—scouting ahead of the main party. Reaching the gate, whispered passwords are exchanged and the doors are barely parted. The group passes within. Then, just as the doors swing shut, a brightly robed figure attacks—one of the Funada clansmen!

The attacker is a Funada relative in the ranks of the samurai retainers. He is an 8th level samurai and is armed with a katana. See the NPC book for information on him. Guarding the oyabun Jirozu are 8 samurai. One is 7th level and the others are all 3rd level. They are surprised by the attack, coming as it does from an unexpected foe and after they had thought they were safe. Also on the scene, though not in the immediate area of the attack is the Hino yakuza/ninja (4th level in each). Charged by his sensei to ensure that no other ninja make an attack on Jirozu, he will not leap into this fray. However, if the Phoenix ninja takes direct action against jirozu, the Hino ninja will realize his presence and begin to hunt for him.

Although the samurai is making the attack, he is not its true source. Rather, the real reason for the attack is a Phoenix wu jen/ninja, O-Kaze, hidden on the roof of a nearby nagaya. From here she has managed to charm her victim and has directed him to attack without ceasing. While the bodyguard are busy defending against this attacker, the Phoenix ninja will use a blowgun with poisoned darts to eliminate Jirozu. She has only three darts

and must make a normal to hit roll. In addition, Jirozu is allowed his normal saving throw. If the darts fail, the wu jen/ninja will use her spells to best affect. She will avoid area effect spells if possible, as she only desires to strike down Jirozu and would prefer for it to look like the act of the Funada. Failing all these, she will attempt to drop down behind Jirozu, strike him down with a backstab and then flee.

Unless the player characters are involved, the Phoenix ninja's plan will work perfectly. If the player characters are present, the event could end in virtually any way. If Jirozu dies, the Funada will reap the blame regardless of the circumstance of his death. If Jirozu lives, the attack will have convinced him that the Funada cannot give him adequate protection. He will not participate in any discussions with them. While the gangs of the city will not turn on the Funada, they will not cooperate either.

### 5. The Sohei Trap

For this event you will need to use the tactical map provided in the NPC booklet. If you have and want to use the *BATTLESYSTEM™* rules, you may want to resolve this event by setting up the terrain and playing out the combat according to those rules. Unit organization for *BATTLESYSTEM™* rules is listed below.

The streets of Nakamaru have become a confused armed camp! Banners fluttering, the sohei of the Winter temple have set out to attack their cowardly enemies at the Shining Mountain temple! Cheerful and chanting their prayers they set out through the winding streets. In no time they reach the red and orange gates of the Shining Mountain temple. The battle is about to begin!

The Winter Sect has advanced with 150 sohei, leaving the remainder at their temple to guard against disaster.

(Perhaps rash and impulsive in this attack, Kidera Ujisato is not a complete fool.) The sohei are organized as follows:

- A: Ten 7th level sohei
- B: Eighty 1st level sohei
- C: Sixty 3rd level sohei

Each unit has its own 8th level commander and Kidera Ujisato acts as the army commander.

However, the battle is not the surprise the Winter Sect sohei think it will be. Armed and awaiting them are 100 of the Shining Mountain sohei and Funada retainers, who arrived during the night. Having the advantage of position and possibly surprise, the Shining Mountain Temple has only risked a part of its force for the defense of the temple, holding the rest back as reserves for a counterattack. The Shining Mountain sohei are organized as follows.

- #1: Fifty 2nd level sohei bowmen
- #2: Twenty 5th level sohei
- #3: Thirty 4th level bushi

The first two units are commanded by 7th level sohei and the bushi are led by a 6th level samurai. The whole force is led by a 9th level sohei.

When the Winter Sect sohei reach the temple, the trap has already been set. The main gates stand slightly ajar and it will be an easy matter for the sohei to force their way in. This is just what their enemy wants them to do. Just beyond the gate are units #2 and #3. Their task is to prevent any further advance of the attackers. In this they have the advantage, since they were able to amass more men than their attackers. Meanwhile, the #1 unit will rise up from their hidden positions on the walls to fire on the attackers who have still not passed through the gate. With the advantage of surprise and cover, the Shining Mountain warriors are confident of success.

Meanwhile, unaware of the trap, the plan of the Winter Sect commanders



is simple. Once the lead unit, C, forces the gate, the bulk of the force (unit B) will rush into the courtyard and spread out to defeat the ill-organized and unprepared defenders. The elite unit, C, will remain in reserve should there be any unforeseen setbacks. Confident that they will achieve total surprise, no contingency plans have been prepared nor has any scaling or seige equipment been brought along.

If the event is to be fought as a *BATTLESYSTEM™* game encounter, the referee should assume the overall command of the Winter Sect sohei. Other players can command specific units (if desired) although the bulk of the forces is not large. The majority of players should assume command of the Shining Mountain troops, using the set-up positions described. Once the battle begins, however, players can exercise command as they see fit.

However, if you do not wish to use the *BATTLESYSTEM™* game, you can still resolve player character participation in the battle. Unless the player characters are influential enough to change the deployments of troops, the sohei on both sides will arrange themselves as already described. The player characters can then react to the situations according to their location. The general course of the battle is described here.

The first wave of Winter sect sohei charge through the gate in great enthusiasm. Hoping to maintain their surprise, they utter no war cries or shout challenges. They press each other close, pushing forward, eager to get into the compound. Thus, when the front rank suddenly sees the enemy formed in lines ahead of them, there is nothing they can do but charge forward. Meanwhile, the ranks behind them, unaware of what has happened, continue to push forward, denying their own front rank any fighting or maneuver room. The leading troops of the Winter sect crash into the set lines of the Shining Mountain sohei and, unable to fight, effectively are cut down.

It is at this point that the rest of the trap is sprung. The second rank of the sohei attempt to retreat, since forward advance is impossible. However, the units behind them are still pressing forward. Confusion begins to grow. Suddenly, with a single voice, the sohei of the Shining Mountain charge forward. The foremost of the attackers panic, turning headlong into their own ranks, but those behind will still not give way. Then, rising up from their concealed positions behind the walls, the Shining Mountain archers pour arrows into the rear formations of the Winter sect sohei. With a shock, the attackers realize their surprise is lost. Confusion and panic take their grip. The front ranks are trapped between their friends and their enemies, while the back ranks are picked off by the well-protected archers from above. The battle ends in a tragic rout. The attackers break and flee, pursued by the fresh reserves of the Shining Mountain temple. Only 30 of the Winter sect warriors make it back to the temple. The others lie dead in the streets or are scattered throughout the city.

## 6. The Final Battle

Only the beginning situation can be given for this event, since the outcome is as yet undecided. The Winter Temple Map can be used for this event.

Even before their return, reports have already begun to filter through the barracks about this morning's battle. The attack on the Shining Mountain temple was a disaster! Hastening to the walls, you see the banners of the great sohei regiments bob and fall while those of your enemy wend their way through the city towards you. Within minutes the first of your comrades, those most fleet of foot, return. Stumbling to the ground of the courtyard, they pant out a story

of shame, how they had boldly charged forth into a trap. It is clear you must prepare for the worst.

Even as the sohei are in the midst of their preparations, the first of the enemy arrive. Staying a respectful distance back, well out of bowshot, they settle in. Several runners come forward, requesting the surrender of the rebellious sohei within the temple. They are refused but no attack comes. It seems that the Shining Mountain commander is quite prudent and carefully gathering his forces surrounds the temple.

Of course, the above scene will be much different if the player characters are among the Shining Mountain sohei or Lord Mitsuhide's men. Then you can give vivid descriptions of a wild chase through the streets of the city, swift furious duels with sohei too exhausted or ashamed to run any farther and finally the sudden halt at the very gates of the Winter Sect temple.

The Shining Mountain forces are keenly aware that they are too few to capture the temple compound of their enemy. Thus, their first goal is to gain the support of the Funada family and then seal the temple off from the surrounding neighborhood. At the same time, those inside are hurriedly sending out messengers requesting aid. Who will come and who will win should depend on the actions and diplomacy of the player characters.





# Glossary

**Bakuto** — A gambler, a type of yakuza gang that specializes in gambling and games of chance.

**Burakumin** — The village people or eta, outcasts from society.

**Chigaidama** — The distinctive staggered shelves found on the back wall of the traditional samurai shoin.

**Chodaigamae** — A small pair of doors along one side of the shoin, near the jodan. The doors lead to other sections of the samurai's mansion and bodyguards may be stationed behind them, out of sight.

**Cryptomeria** — A tall, thick-trunked type of cedar that is often used for beams, pillars, and major supports.

**Daimyo** — The military governor of a province or group of provinces who in turn serves the shogun.

**Eta** — The lowest social class, they are almost non-people, performing the tasks considered unclean by all others of the society.

**Gakusho** — A non-adventuring priest, one who is mainly involved in scholarly pursuits.

**Geisha** — A female entertainer and hostess highly trained in courtesy, singing, dancing, and other sophisticated social graces. The skill of a geisha lies in her ability to relax and entertain her guests.

**Genkan** — A small alcove near the entrance to a house.

**Giri** — A person's sense of obligation, loyalty, and duty to others, particularly superiors or traditions.

**Gurentai** — Hoodlums, members of a yakuza gang who specialize in enforcement and strong-arm work.

**Hirayamajiro** — A castle set on a hill that rises above the surrounding plain. Other classifications include yamajiro (castle on a mountain) and hirajiro (castle on a plain).

**Ishiotoshi** — Chutes built into the outer walls of a castle through which the defender can drop stones on the attacker.

**Jodan** — The highest section of the shoin, where the lord receives guests.

**Kobun** — The "son" or follower of the oyabun in a yakuza gang.

**Koku** — A measure of rice (approx. 1 bushel) that is used as a measure of wealth.

**Kurumayose** — The carriage entrance or main entrance to a mansion, often an open archway where a guest can reach a palanquin.

**Mikoshi** — A portable shrine carried on two poles by teams of bearers.

**Minka** — A commoner's farmhouse or village house. They normally have high-peaked roofs covered in thatch, shingles, or tile.

**Nagaya** — Long houses of one or two stories that serve as barracks, armories or storehouses. They usually line the walls of a compound or castle.

**Ninjitsu** — The study of the arts of the ninja.

**Noren** — Curtains used to screen off a doorway. Storefronts often have colored noren, marked with a symbol of the business within.

**Oyabun** — The "father" or head of a yakuza gang who guides and looks after his children, the "kobun."

**Pagoda** — A tower of one or more stories built on temple grounds as a monument to the deities of the temple.

**Ronin** — A samurai without a master, either through death, dismissal or requested severance.

**Sake** — An alcoholic drink made from fermented rice.

**Sengoku-daimyo** — A daimyo who, while supposedly subservient to the shogun, was for all practical purposes an independent warlord.

**Shogun** — The rank of supreme military commander which eventually became the true ruler of the nation.

**Shoin** — A formalized style of reception hall found in samurai homes. A series of one or more rooms, each slightly higher than the last, where the lord holds audiences, receives guests and conducts certain official ceremonies.

**Soan** — A "grass cottage," a style of garden tea-house noted for its simplicity and rustic nature.

**Tamon** — The long narrow buildings built on top of castle walls. Tamon were commonly used as storehouses and armories and gave protection to defenders atop the wall.

**Tekiya** — Those groups of yakuza who specialize in protection rackets and selling shoddy goods.

**Tenshu** — The tower of a castle.

**Tenshu-kaku** — The main tower or donjon of a castle.

**Tokonoma** — A narrow, recessed shelf at the back of the shoin. It usually takes up most of the wall and is decorated by a large painting.

**Torii** — The characteristic red archway found at the entrance to shrines.

# Encounter Construction

## Booklet

The main booklet of *Blood of the Yakuza* presents detailed background information on the city of Nakamaru and the events that can occur there. It is not a standard module or adventure like you may be accustomed to—there are no dungeons or room keys. Indeed there is very little in the way of rules in the first booklet.

This booklet contains the actual materials you need to construct any encounter—NPCs and maps. In addition, it also has material to aid in creating your own encounters. Think of this booklet as a toolkit to aid the campaign and you will be able to use it to its full potential. In addition to the maps and NPCs required for the adventures already described in Nakamaru, there are additional materials that can be used. These include maps of typical buildings within the city and tables and forms for creating NPCs.

To get the most from these additional materials, they should be combined with those already published. These include the maps in the back of the *ORIENTAL ADVENTURES* rulebook and *OA1: Swords of the Daimyo*. By assembling these materials, you will have a useful collection of source material for creating your own adventures and campaigns.

There is much that still has been left unsaid about Nakamaru, more than can be covered in a single booklet. These facts are the things that the DM should provide for the game. How many people live in the city? How many troops does the daimyo command? How many bodyguards do the different samurai families have? These details do not have a great impact on the adventures described here and are left unsaid. Your campaign and your opinions will determine the answers. Do your player characters already command great numbers of troops? Then the daimyo's army should be appropriately large. Do you want characters to have access to many different goods and services? Then Nakamaru should be a large, well-populated city. The DM must make these decisions.

## NPC Listing

Those NPCs mentioned in *Blood of the Yakuza* are listed below. They are in alphabetical order and include any NPCs or monsters mentioned in text. Each listing provides the basic information you need to handle an encounter with that character. Information includes the name, significant position (if any), class, level, ability scores, and hit points. The Typical AC (Armor Class) listing gives one or more armor classes. The first AC listing is when the NPC is in a casual or unplanned encounter. Listings in parentheses give the Armor Class when the NPC has been warned and has time to prepare. Magical Items lists those things in the possession of a character which is likely to be used. All NPCs have full knowledge of the magic items they carry.

The honor of the different families and NPCs is not calculated on these rosters. As a general rule, NPCs do not require an honor number. It is sufficient to remember that most characters (especially samurai) attempt to act honorably and avoid losing an honor point when possible. Furthermore, the amount of honor possessed by NPCs should be similar to that of the player characters. This will encourage all characters (NPC and player) to behave in roughly similar manners.

If a situation results wherein you do need the honor of any given NPC, take the base number from the appropriate social class and add 3-18 points to it. This then represents the NPC's current honor.

CLASS:            ST:    DX:        CON:    IN:        WIS:    CH:

*Anchin* (Human), Tsuyoi-no-kami acolyte.  
Monk, 1st level    15    15    11    13    17    8  
Hit Points: 8; Typical AC: 8; Alignment: LG; Martial Arts: AC 6, #AT 1, D 1-4, Special Maneuvers Known—choke hold, weapon catch.

*Description:* Anchin is a newly accepted monk, still wet behind the ears. Being in a low position, he is given all the most difficult and trying tasks—the menial work no one else wishes to perform. Currently he is chafing under this load and questioning why he ever wanted to do this in the first place. Although he does not realize it, this is a perfectly normal stage of

becoming a full-fledged monk. He thinks, instead, that his doubts are weaknesses sure to doom him from any chance of success.

*Bakemono* (NA: 40)  
AC 6, MV 6, HD 1-1, Average hp 2, #AT 1, D 16 (average), AL CE.  
Lieutenants (x2): AC 4, HD 2, hp 10, 8; D 1

*Bupposo* (Human), Winter Sect Monk.  
Monk, 6th level    15    15    14    13    15    14  
Hit Points: 19; Typical AC: 6; Alignment: LN; Magical Items: *wand of wonder*; Martial Arts Style: Hard Push; #AT 3/2, D 1-6 +2; Special Maneuvers known: Concentrated push, pain touch, meditation, sticking touch.

*Description:* Bupposo has been with the Winter Sect monastery for many years and is in actuality a very poor monk. His only true monkly virtue is his incredible patience. Otherwise, he is stubborn, mischievous, irreverent and even a little spiteful, remembering slights for a very long time. He has stuck out the rigors of the monastery for many years with only a slow spiritual improvement. Indeed, if it weren't for the escapades he and Kogi sometimes embark upon, it is doubtful that he would ever have improved his position in the monastery. Nonetheless, he is a skilled teacher, his own worst qualities working to his advantage in this case.

*Buso, Tigbanua* (NA: 1).  
AC 4, MV 12", HD 8 + 2, hp 35, #AT 3, D 1-6 (x2)/1 -10, fear radius 10', saving throw vs. tagamaling infection; AL CE.

*Buso, Tagamaling* (NA: 4).  
AC 5, MV 12", HD 1, hp 1,2,3,6; #AT 3, D 1-4 (x2)/1-8, AL CE.

*Description:* These four people (simple commoners during the day) are all victims of the tigbanua buso in its gradual efforts to increase its territory. The percentage chances that each will change are 87%, 81%, 57% and 33%.

*Funada Genzo* (Human), Master of the Port, Son of Toyoo.  
Samurai, 6th level    15    16    14    14    13    15  
Hit Points: 41; Typical AC: 8 (1); Alignment: LN; Magical Items: *long sword +2* (gift from a Shou Lung merchant), *haramaki-do of quality*, potion of *diminution*.

*Description:* Funada Genzo, of average height and broad-frame, is an arrogant but efficient harbormaster. Commander of the shipyard garrison and supervisor of the shipping in the port, he is an extremely vital part of the city's economy. While committed to the success of the family, Genzo also sees to his own financial security through a system of kickbacks and bribes which foreign merchants must provide him. He is careful never to make these claims overly excessive and uses his garrison troops to discourage any complaints. Furthermore, he provides thorough protection and aid to those who do meet his terms. His greatest weakness is his love for money. It has made him fear death or certainly delay it, thus putting off his resolve to die in service of his master, Lord Mitsuhide.

*Funada Hashiba* (Human), Son of Mitsuhide, Abbot of the Shining Mountain Temple.

Shukenja, 12th level    13    12    12    10    12    9  
Hit Points: 35; Typical AC: 9; Alignment: NG; Magical Items: *ring of protection +1*, scroll of *protection from spirits*, scroll with *aid*, *spek with animals*, *cure disease*, *find the path*.

*Description:* Hashiba is 33 years old. He has risen to a position of power at such an early age partly through his own ability and partly through the influence of his father. As such, he is not fully prepared for his task. He is easily browbeaten by Mitsuhide in any matters relating to the family and is well aware of his own failings. He is thin and unnaturally tall for his family, standing almost 5' 10". It is easy to spot his shaven head above a crowd. His title is Eye of the Law.

**Funada Mitsuhide** (Human), Daimyo of Nakamaru.

Samurai, 17th level 13 12 14 14 13 12  
Hit Points: 54; Typical AC: 9 (0); Alignment: LN; Magical Items: *Katana of Luck* (a gift from the shogun), *O-yoroi +3*, scroll of *protection from spirits*, charm of *protection from disease*, *paper of forms* (3 sheets), potion of *tengu control*, potion of *hengeyokai control*.

**Description:** Funada Mitsuhide is a shrewd old man, tough and seasoned from years of campaigning. He sports a wispy white beard and his face is heavily lined and cracked. A jagged scar, pale white against his weather-beaten skin, runs behind his right ear and down his neck, a trophy from his years of service to the shogun. In conversation, his once strong voice has weakened, becoming high pitched and thin. He rarely reveals his mind, but misses nothing. He is related to the shogun of Wa, his father being an uncle of Matasuuri Nagahide.

**Funada Toyoo** (Human), Brother of Mitsuhide

Samurai, 15th level 15 10 15 14 15 12  
Hit Points: 60; Typical AC: 9 (1); Alignment: LN; Magical Items: Scroll of *protection from possession*, *ring of mammal control*, *dagger +1*, *ring of x-ray vision*, *katana +3* (detect large traps, locate object; semiempathy), *o-yoroi +2*.

**Description:** Funada Toyoo is a straight-backed man of strict demeanor and attitude. He is about 54 years old, although he is unsure of his exact age. He bears a striking resemblance to his brother, although he does not carry the visible effects of aging. His hair is still black and his small beard is glossy and straight. Accustomed to giving orders on the battlefield, he normally speaks in a booming voice. Slyer than his brother, he lacks some of his patience, preferring a swift and decisive victory even if at extreme cost.

**Gamo Hidenobu** (Human), Retainer of Funada family.

Bushi, 6th level 10 14 15 9 16 16  
Hit Points: 31; Typical AC: 10 (4); Alignment: CE; Magical Items: *gaijin long sword +1*, *wand of illumination*, *dust of disappearance*.

**Description:** The eldest of the three Gamo brothers, Hidenobu is the most seasoned and toughened of the lot. He is out-and-out a hard case. Several times he has been involved in questionable duels and vendettas. His face and arms are badly scarred from his fights and two of his front teeth are missing. Mildly embarrassed by this, he seldom smiles.

**Gamo Mitsutoshi** (Human), Retainer of the Funada family.

Bushi, 4th level 11 17 9 14 14 9  
Hit Points: 19; Typical AC: 7 (5); Alignment: CE; Magical Items: *wakizashi +1*, *two-handed sword of quality*, *short sword of quality*, scroll of *protection from petrification*.

**Description:** Second oldest of the Gamo brothers, Mitsutoshi has a fetish for weapons, swords in particular. Rude and arrogant, he is little loved by any who have met him. Bearded and mustached, he has a regular habit of spitting in public. He has traveled quite a bit and is familiar with a number of strange things.

**Gamo Mochikuni** (Human), Retainer of the Funada family.

Bushi, 2d level 11 11 16 10 12 16  
Hit Points: 13; Typical AC: 10 (5); Alignment: CE; Magical Items: *potion of invisibility*.

**Description:** The youngest of the Gamo brothers, Mochikuni has been heavily influenced in his behavior by his evil brothers. Lacking even their limited experience, he compensates by bravado and bluster. His image is one of a gaudy tough, wearing loud clothing and swaggering through the streets.

**Getsu** (tigbanua buso).

AC 4, MV 12", HD 8 + 2, hp 27, #AT 3, D 1-6 (x2)/1 -10, fear radius 10', sav-

ing throw vs. tagamaling infection; AL CE.

**Description:** This creature, while normally fearsome, has been rendered even more formidable. Unlike most others of its kind, it has developed a complete and cunning intelligence. Learning the speech of mankind, it has named itself Getsu and has developed a scheme to destroy the hated man-things. Crueller even than the worst of its own kind, Getsu is not above toying and tormenting its victims prior to their destruction.

**Goblin Rats** (NA: 30).

AC 7, MV 9", HD 3, Average hp 17, #AT 1, D 1-8 (wakizashi), or 1-6 (nagasaki); Shapechange to rat-man form, +1 to cat-like creatures fighting goblin rats; AL LE.

Chieftain: AC 4, HD 5, hp 31, D 1-8 (katana) or 1-8 +2 bite.

**Gorath** (Men-shen, see this booklet), Agent of the Shou Lung Emperor.

AC -2, MV 12/12, HD 10, hp 55, #AT 2, D 1-8 +4 (x2), *fly*, become astral, improved *invisibility* (all at will), *polymorph self* (x2/day), *apparition* (in normal form), *ESP* (continually in effect), 1/2 damage from most spells, AL N.

**Description:** The Gorath (or just Gorath) is a men-shen, a greater spirit in the service of the Shou Lung Emperor Chin. The creature is ancient in age, having faithfully served the Chin line to the best of its ability for centuries. It claims it has been assigned this duty by the Celestial Emperor. Gorath has encountered Liti-hsia Chih several times in the past and they are mortal enemies.

**Goshukara Akinari** (Human), Head of Goshukara family.

Samurai, 14th level 15 18 17 15 16 15  
Hit Points: 83; Typical AC: 6 (-3); Alignment: LG; Magical Items: *katana +2*, *wakizashi +2* (matched set and family treasure), *o-yoroi +2* (gift from the emperor), *spear +2*.

**Description:** A strapping man of 46 years, Akinari is a vigorous and determined leader. Clean-shaven and stocky, his thinning hair is normally tied back in the tea-whisk style. His right arm is stiff from a battle injury, but it does not slow him noticeably. He is extremely proud of his family's heritage and of his title as Regulator and Great Counsellor, Junior Grade, Second Rank. Although he is good, he measures this by the standard of the welfare of his own family.

**Goshukara Sadamoto** (Human), Brother of Goshukara Akinari.

Samurai, 10th level 17 13 15 16 15 12  
Hit Points: 62; Typical AC: 10 (2); Alignment: LN; Magical Items: *ring of free action*, *chain mail +3*, *katana +1*, *wakizashi +1* (matched set).

**Description:** Slender and filled with nervous energy, Sadamoto is not normally given to plots or schemes, acting more often on impulse. He is, like his brother, concerned for the success and survival of the family and is especially desirous for a restoration of its fortunes. Restrained by the cooler logic of his brother, Sadamoto often finds his wild and violent schemes modified and put into action. He is always seen in public armed, since he is convinced that the Funada brothers would attack him in an instant.

**Grandfather Uruma** (Human), Worthless Flower Oyabun.

Yakuza, 16th level 13 15 7 13 13 16  
Hit Points: 31; Typical AC: 9 (4); Alignment: NE; Magical Items: *wakizashi of quality*, *ring of warmth*, *potion of growth*, *cap of telepathy*, *potion of longevity*, *potion of speed*.

**Description:** Grandfather Uruma is an ancient man, wizened and bent, who looks like he should be 90 or 100 years old. Shriveled looks, however, disguise an energetic mind and body. Though old, Uruma is able to fight and caper about with the best of them. His shrewd brain obviates any need for this as he sits in his home and directs the operations of the gang from his garden veranda. His cap of telepathy, a treasured item, allows

him to send orders and receive reports without seeming to be involved. His sub-bosses are never sure that their minds are being scanned or that operations put into effect by their fellows are done at the orders of the oyabun or not. This keeps them suspicious of each other and dependent upon Grandfather Uruma for guidance.

*Hino Sadamoto* (Human), Head of Sadamoto family.  
Bushy, 7th level 17 16 13 12 12 12  
Hit Points: 42; Typical AC: 8 (1); Alignment: LE.

*Description:* Hino Sadamoto was once a strong man with a promising career; however, a life of dissolution and evil living have reduced him to a hollow husk. His face bears the signs of his wastrel life—hollow-eyed and sunken-cheeked. He is nervous and twitchy and given to sudden fits of temper. His clothes and hair, once fine, are poorly cared for and unkempt. He sleeps late in the morning and often comes home late at night in a drunken stupor. He has few friends remaining.

*Hu hsien.*  
AC 7, MV 15, HD 6, #AT 1, D 1-6, *invisible, polymorph self, disguise, chameleon, know history, hypnotism, read magic, comprehend languages, ventriloquism, apparition, ESP, hypnotic pattern* (all at will), possess, servant horde, major creation (all x1/day), reward, ancient curse (all x3/week), fascination power in human form, +3 weapon or better to hit.

*Ichi* (Korobokuru), Big Head kobun.  
Yakuza, 6th level 11 16 14 15 11 16  
Hit Points: 19; Typical AC: 8 (5); Alignment: NE; Magical Items: *potions of growth and invisibility*.

*Description:* Ichi is a short, thin, wispy type of fellow, forever cringing and bowing in the presence of others. His nasal voice carries his continual wheedling whine to occasionally piercing levels. Although he visits the Winter Sect temple regularly, he is more commonly found among the low-life of the eta community. Here he plays the part of the boastful bully, self-important and cruel. He has many equally miserable cronies, but no true friends.

*Ikiryō of Lady Kei.*  
AC nil, MV nil, HD nil, hp nil, #AT 1, D nil, ability drain, AL CE.

*Description:* This is the ikiryō of Kei-ko, second wife of Funada Mitsuhide. This strange and malignant spirit is haunting the new, third wife, Lady Nyo.

*Jiki-ketsu-gaki.*  
AC 2, MV 12/6, HD 8, #AT 3, D 1-3 (x2)/1-8, *invisible, polymorph to insect, passwall* (all at will), blood drain, +3 weapons or better to hit, regenerate 1 hp/round, immune to cold and fire attacks, AL CE.

*Jiki-niku-gaki.*  
AC 6, MV 12/6, HD 3, #AT 3, D 1-4 (x2)/1-8, *invisible, polymorph to insect, passwall* (all at will), regenerate 1 hp/turn, AL CE.

*Jirozu no Nakamaru* (Human), Big Head Oyabun.  
Yakuza, 14th level 15 15 8 16 15 16  
Hit Points: 43; Typical AC: 6; Alignment: N; Magical Items: *daikyu + 1 to hit, spear + 1, padded leather of quality, Shou Lung broad sword + 3, lajatang of quality*.

*Description:* Jirozu is an obese 40-year-old man. His hair is thick and coarse and his face is pock-marked. Having risen to power from a lowly life as a waterfront laborer, he is acutely aware of both his power and his social position. While his looks are not impressive, he compensates with a charming and crafty personality. He is quick to give the appearance of friendliness, but always evaluates and judges the opportunities of any situation. Thus, he is a dangerous man to know. He has a love of odd and

unusual weapons and will pay honest prices for such things (particularly gaijin items).

*Kaian* (Human), Tsuyoi-no-kami follower.  
Monk, 5th level 15 15 17 8 15 15  
Hit Points: 23; Typical AC: 6; Alignment: LG; Magical Items: +1 *kusarigama*. Martial Arts Style: Soft Lock, AC 6, #AT 5/4, D 1-4 + 1, Special Maneuvers Known—choke hold, weapon catch, locking block, all around sight.

*Description:* Although not a powerful man or of high rank within the monastery, Kaian is respected by his fellows for his piety and dedication. With his bony frame and bulging eyes, he is a common sight striding through the temple on one errand after another. He has the curiously distressing habit of talking to himself at all times.

*Kidera Takeshi* (Human), Head of Kidera family.  
Samurai, 12th level 14 10 14 10 16 17  
Hit Points: 47; Typical AC: 10 (3); Magical Items: *wakizashi +2* (gift from Funada Toyoo), *potion of clairaudience*.

*Description:* Kidera Takeshi is an old man, 70 years or more in age. His hair is totally white and his face is heavily lined. He walks with a slight stoop but still carries himself with great dignity. He is harsh and authoritarian, used to ruling his family absolutely. He conducts all affairs with great formality and proper etiquette and expects the same of all others. He very much is trying to live according to the "old ways."

*Kidera Ujisato* (Human), Second son of Takeshi, Sohei commander of the Winter Sect.  
Sohei, 10th level 17 16 13 13 12 14  
Hit Points: 49; Typical AC: 7 (2); Alignment: LG; Magical Items: *long sword + 1* (+2 vs. L) in the Shou Lung style (weapon of choice), *haraate gawa of quality, scroll with strength, immunity to weapons, smite, and speak with monsters, dagger + 1, o-yoroi + 1*.

*Description:* Ujisato is the proud son of Takeshi and he has inherited many of the qualities of his father. Lean and wiry, he manages to be correct and proper while at the same time remaining cheerful and friendly with his men. He is well-liked and trusted and is in fact a good commander. He trusts others but is not blind to deception and duplicity. When thinking on a problem or considering a situation, he tends to suck on his lower lip.

*Kogi* (River spirit folk), Winter Sect monk.  
Monk, 8th level 16 17 11 14 15 15  
Hit Points: 24; Typical AC: 4; Alignment: LN; Martial Arts Style: Hard Push, #AT 3/2, D 2/2, Special Maneuvers known: Concentrated push, pain touch, meditation, sticking touch, one finger.

*Description:* Kogi is a plump and jolly fellow, friendly to all who meet him. Lurking under this cheerful exterior is an iron self-discipline and a wicked sense of humor. Kogi (along with his lifelong companion Bupposo) has one great failing as a monk—an irresistible taste for mischief. He is aware of this failing and laments that it will keep him from ever reaching spiritual perfection, but rationalizes it away by claiming it helps keep life in the proper perspective. Those who have been the butt of his pranks have other things to say about this. Still, Kogi is a good monk in general and an excellent instructor, a task he greatly enjoys. He thinks little of his spirit folk heritage and is occasionally embarrassed when others remind him of it.

*Kuei of Lord Toragi.*  
AC -4, MV 18") HD 6, hp 31, #AT 1, D 1-12, +4 weapon or greater to hit, *ethereal* (at will), possess (x3/day), immune to *ESP, charm, enchantment, illusion, water-based spells, normal life and cold*.

*Description:* The kuei of Lord Toragi, uncle of Lord Mitsuhide, lurks in the outermost bailey of the castle, the place where his banishment was pronounced. Sentenced by the shogun due to the false charges of his half-brother, the kuei is still attempting to prove Toragi's innocence and avenge the family name. If it successfully possesses a person, it will attempt to trick Lord Mitsuhide into revealing the deeds of his father and then slay the current daimyo. Once this is done, the kuei will depart.

*Kura* (Human), Big Head kobun.  
Yakuza, 8th level 11 16 10 13 7 17

Hit Points: 23; Typical AC: 7; Alignment: CE; Magical Items: None

*Description:* Kura is a hot-tempered and dynamic young man who has risen quickly on the strength of his personality. Charming and magnetic, he is far too rash for his own good. Unfortunately, his persuasive ability often convinces others to join him in his rash schemes. He can be easily identified by a long, jagged scar running the length of his left arm; thus, he normally wears long-sleeved clothing even in the hottest of weather.

*Lesser Nature Spirit.*  
AC 7, MV 12, HD 3, #AT 1, D 1-8, *invisible, polymorph self, detect evil, detect magic, detect harmony* (all at will), MR 20%, AL N.

*Liu-hsia Chih* (Human), Leader of the Many-Hued Peacock Society.  
Wu jen, 16th level 11 9 14 18 18 14  
Hit Points: 31; Typical AC: IO; Alignment: CG; Magical Items: *potion of longevity, scroll of protection from shapechangers, bell of warning, scroll with protection from charm, tongues, dispel illusion, spectral force, animate dead, metal skin; wand of frost, figurine of wondrous power (onyx dog), short bow +1* (to hit).

*Description:* Liu-hsia appears to be a man of about 60. Fairly tall and straight-backed, he has a well-groomed powder-grey beard and thinning hair, obviously dyed. His eyes are noticeably colorless, making his face utterly unfathomable. Although he appears elderly, the lines on his face do not come close to revealing his true age of 500 years. A brilliant plotter and schemer, he has extraordinary patience and capacity for trickery. His hated adversary and rival is the creature, Gorath.

*Lu Nat.*  
AC -2, MV 9, HD 8, #AT 3, D 1-8 (x3)/1-4, *invisible, levitate, ESP, comprehend languages, deflection, dream vision, possess animal, detect shapechanger, quickgrowth, passwall, dancing blade, apparition, transfix, melt, fire shuriken, stinking cloud* (all at will), *curse, creeping darkness* (both x3/day), *water to poison, wood rot* (both x1/day), *disease 10' radius*, +3 weapons or better to hit, 1/2 damage from electrical and fire attacks, 10% magic resistance, AL CE.

*Mashida Kowa* (Korobokuru), Retainer of Goshukara family.  
Samurai, 5th level 18 73 17 15 15 16 15  
Hit Points: 27; Typical AC: 7 (2); Alignment: LN; Magical Items: *katana +1, ring of fire resistance.*

*Description:* Mashida Kowa is an exceptional person. Born in the wooded mountains beyond Nakamaru, his prodigious strength, quick mind, and biting wit endeared him to the Mashida family, who adopted him into their clan. Under their sponsorship, he has become a rising samurai with a potentially brilliant future. However, his heritage and his skills have also made him many bitter enemies and rivals, who consider him an ill-begotten upstart. He attempts to live his life as a normal human and is extremely sensitive towards racial slights.

*Miyagi-ko* (Human), Concubine of Funada Toyoo.  
Court lady 10 10 9 10 16 17  
Hit Points: 5; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: NG

*Description:* Miyagi-ko is the graceful and charming concubine of Lord Toyoo. She has lived in the Funada household for 22 years and is now 39 years old. Although not officially his wife, Miyagi-ko is the mother of Toyoo's favorite son. Thus, she wields a great deal of power in the household, even greater than Toyoo's First Wife. This pleases her to no end and she will gladly use her power to make life miserable for any rivals. Her greatest fear is that her son will lose Toyoo's favor; thus she is always on her guard against machinations to bring about his downfall.

*Nagoya Hatano* (Bamboo Spirit Folk), Head of Hatano family.  
Samurai, 8th level 15 13 16 14 13 12  
Hit Points: 53; Typical AC: IO (4); Alignment: LN; Magical Items: *metal scale armor +2, carpet of flying, wand of magic missiles.*

*Description:* Nagoya Hatano is a warrior of little distinction except for his heritage. His father was a minor samurai in the service of Lord Toragi. His mother was a beautiful spirit of the wood. Through mysterious circumstances the two were wed and a son (Hatano) was born. Then, equally mysteriously, Hatano's mother disappeared. Since then, Hatano has always been viewed with a trace of suspicion by others who feel there is something not natural about him. Hatano is keenly aware of this and has withdrawn into his own family. He is bitter and sullen, given to saying little. His face has a perpetual sad haunted look.

*Nagoya Kenko* (Human), Son of Nagoya Hatano.  
Bushi, 5th level 15 15 12 10 8 16  
Hit Points: 26; Typical AC: 10 (7); Alignment: NE; Magical Items: *wand of negation.*

*Description:* With the birth of Nagoya Kenko, the spirit folk blood of Hatano was thinned to the point of not being significant. Indeed, all that Kenko inherited were handsome looks and a wild streak of irresponsibility. Secretly resentful of his father for his unnatural heritage, Kenko has shamelessly exploited his father's love of his children. As a result, he is hopelessly spoiled—petty, pompous, and openly disrespectful. He is an utter and complete cad. His own vanity causes him to spend more than he can afford on clothes. He is fascinated by mirrors, but only when he is reflected in them.

*Nan-Kuo* (Human), Many Hued Peacock Society member.  
Monk, 4th level 15 15 15 15 15 7  
Hit Points: 13; Typical AC: 7; Alignment: LN; Martial Arts Style: Tae Kwon Do, #AT 1, D 18, Special Maneuvers Known—circle kick, iron fist, flying kick, backward kick.

*Description:* Nan-kuo is a lonely and unhappy man. Forced by war to leave his monastery in Tu Lung, he has been traveling the lands of Kara-Tur in search of enlightenment. Unfortunately, he has had no luck and fears the particular philosophy of his monastery has been destroyed forever. Thus, although he has traveled greatly, the lack of instruction has slowed his advancement in the philosophies of his sect. Now, he must teach himself—recreating the particular chains of thought of his ancient masters. His travels and his studies have given him much wisdom and pain, for he can no longer see the world from a single point of view.

*Nyo-ko* (Human), Third Wife of Lord Mitsuhide.  
Normal Human 12 16 12 17 12 16

*Description:* Lady Nyo, a young woman approximately 17 years of age, is demure and delicate and has totally captured the heart of her husband, Lord Mitsuhide, for the moment. She is skilled in singing and poetry and her parents have gone to great trouble to teach her refined graces. Furthermore, she is the daughter of a daimyo of a distant province. The marriage was arranged by agents of the shogun to solidify the relations between the shogun's extended family and this distant daimyo. Now, however, Nyo-ko has become the target of an ikiryō.



**O-Cho** (Human), Handmaiden of Sumi-ko.  
 Normal Human 13 11 8 13 13 13  
 Hit Points: 5; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: NG.

*Description:* O-Cho is a quiet wallflower of a woman in her mid-twenties. She has been in the service of the Funada family for 10 years and has developed a strong friendship with Sumi-ko. Indeed, she secretly thinks of Sumi-ko as her little sister, in need of protection and guidance. Several times in the past she has secretly intervened in family difficulties to smooth over situations for her "little sister." Her devotion has not gone unnoticed and she is considered a good and loyal servant.

**Oe Shodayu** (Human), Retainer of Funada.  
 Bushi, 5th level 10 13 11 12 11 11  
 Hit Points: 21; Typical AC: 10 (6); Alignment: LG; Magical Items: *ring mail +1, +3 vs. missiles, wand of magic detection.*

*Description:* Oe Shodayu is a 50-year-old-warrior, tired of fighting and battle. He would much prefer to study the classics and pass his time peacefully improving himself. As such, he has advanced little in his profession, lacking the true warlike spirit. Still, he is not a figure of fun or ridicule since he carries out his duties faithfully and to the best of his abilities. In combat, he normally seeks to force his opponent to surrender or flee, since he has a general distaste for bloodletting.

**Oka Sanai** (Human), Retainer of the Goshukara family.  
 Bushi, 3rd level 11 11 12 12 17 12  
 Hit Points: 15; Typical AC: 10 (6); Alignment: N; Magical Items: *daikyu +1 (to hit), ring of water walking, halberd +2.*

*Description:* Oka Sanai is a small man with a noticeably large nose and weak chin. Ill-favored in appearance, he is a fount of sound advice and wise counsel to his friends. He dislikes physical exertion and prefers to win battles with a minimum of effort.

**Oka Yoshinaka** (Human), Retainer of the Goshukara family.  
 Bushi, 1st level 11 12 12 11 18 18  
 Hit Points: 4; Typical AC: 10 (6); Alignment: NG.

*Description:* The younger brother of Oka Sanai, Yoshinaka has only just reached the age of majority. Learning at his brother's feet, he has inherited Sanai's sound wisdom and shows great promise as a warrior-scholar. Furthermore, he has been blessed with extraordinary grace and handsomeness. He can dazzle men and women without even trying. Fortunately, his sound common sense has kept him from the paths of evil that vanity and narcissism could easily lead him into. Instead, while he values and cares for his appearance (knowing it to be a great asset), he does not let it get the better of him.

**O-Kaze** (Human), Phoenix ninja.  
 Wu jen/ninja, 8/9 10 14 15 15 15 15  
 Hit Points: 34; Typical AC: 2; Alignment: NE; Magical Items: *nekode +1 (detect secret doors), needles +3 (x30), short sword of quality, scroll with dismissal, bracers of defense AC 3, diamond mace.*

*Description:* Little is known of O-Kaze other than she is a woman of some skill and ability.

**Oni, common**  
 AC 4, MV 9" HD 8, hp 32, 43; #AT 2, D 3-10 (x2), *polymorph self (x3/day), fly (x3/day), invisible (x2/day), cloud trapeze (x1/day), cause fear (at will);* AL LE.

*Description:* The first of two oni is dedicated to destroying the priests of Shining Mountain Temple. He has several hiding places throughout the city. Hidden in his different lairs is a total of 1,000 fen, 1,209 tael, 100 ch'ien, and 9 gems. This creature is totally blood-thirsty and will attack with great savagery. The second oni, while a hideous and dangerous

creature, is tormented by memories of his previous life as a wicked human merchant. He has no permanent lair but has been seen wandering the streets for a wise and generous holy man under whom he can study. However, he occasionally succumbs to his more bestial nature, especially when frightened.

**O-Shino** (Human).  
 Normal Human 10 7 12 12 12 14  
 Hit Points: 5; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: NG.

*Description:* O-Shino is an independent-minded young woman of modest means. She has no family at all, misfortune having hit her hard. She is basically honest, but is willing, out of necessity, to be a part of questionable affairs. She is neither brilliant nor idiotic, being modest and unassuming in all things.

**Sensei** (Human), Head of Hino ninja.  
 Wu jen/ninja, 11/9 7 16 16 15 14 14  
 Hit Points: 39; Typical AC: 8; Alignment: NE; Magical Items: *large shuriken stars +3 (x13), scroll with dancing blade, remove curse, elemental turning, wall of stone, kawanaga of quality, amulet of proof against detection and location.*

*Description:* There is no physical description of Sensei, since he never appears in public without a disguise or covering over his face. Indeed little is known of him at all. He seldom leaves his village, handling all affairs possible from there. He is a master of Earth Element magic and is a dangerous foe. Although not physically strong, he is a brilliant and clever opponent and is always equipped with an extraordinary number of gimmicks and gadgets.

**The Serpent** (Fox Hengeyokai), Leader of the Phoenix ninja.  
 Yakuza/ninja, 8/13 18 15 12 16 12 16  
 Hit Points: 32; Typical AC: 8; Alignment: NE; Magical Items: *wand of enemy detection, parang of quality, potion of fire resistance, arrows of quality (x12), katana +3, leather armor of healing +1.*  
 Guard Dog: AC 6, MV 12, HD 2+2, hp 11, #AT 1

*Description:* As with all ninja, little is known of the woman called the Serpent. As head of the Phoenix ninja, she conducts all her meetings from behind a gauze or shoji screen. What little is known is that she is physically powerful, strong-willed, merciless, and capricious. It is rumored that she is beautiful. It is not known that she is a hengeyokai or that she is a member of the Black Mist yakuza gang (although only of minor rank). The Serpent does not try to disguise herself in public, relying on the fact that no one knows her appearance anyway. Her only identifying trademark is her fondness for dogs.

**Sumi-ko** (Human), Daughter of Funada Toyoo.  
 Normal Human 13 12 11 9 8 17  
 Hit Points: 6; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: LG.

*Description:* Sumi-ko is the demure 17-year-old daughter of the powerful and important Lord Toyoo. Currently uncommitted to any marriage arrangements, she is the darling of Toyoo's children. Impetuous and filled with the foolishness of youth, she is naive enough to believe the advances of any handsome man who might court her. After all, at age 17, she is in earnest fear of becoming an old maid.

**Taichi** (Monkey Hengeyokai), Magical Advisor to Funada Mitsuhide.  
 Wu jen, level 9 12 11 12 15 6 12  
 Hit Points: 35; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: CE; Magical Items: *scroll with animate fire, metal skin; scroll with accuracy, ESP, fire shuriken, melt metal, passwall, water to poison; short sword +1, potion of clairvoyance.*

*Description:* Taichi is a mischievous fellow who has found it useful to surround himself in mystery. He lives in the mountains behind Nakamaru and appears in the city at the unknown summons of his master, Lord Mit-

suhide. His face has a faint muzzle-like appearance, disclosing his monkey nature. While not a powerful wizard in levels and spell-casting, Taichi delights in collecting and hoarding odd magics. This renders him powerful, for one can never be certain just what trick he might have on hand. He is a poor advisor in matters involving wisdom or patience, but has a keen and perceptive brain. Taichi has a habit of hopping gently on one foot if kept waiting or otherwise impatient.

*Tsuga Mosake* (Crane hengeyokai), Retainer of the Funada family.  
Kensai, 6th level 13 17 15 13 12 13  
Hit Points: 40; Typical AC: 4; Alignment: LG; Kensai Weapon: Spear;  
Magical Items: scroll of *protection from possession*.

*Description:* Tsuga Mosake was adopted into the Tsuga family as a child (in honor of services rendered by his real family). Since that time, the long-legged youth has grown into the pillar of the Tsuga family. A model of filial piety, all his actions are directed towards increasing the honor of his family. He has several little birdlike mannerisms that mark his heritage.

*Ueda Teisho* (Sea Spirit Folk).  
Bushi, 7th level 16 12 9 11 9 15  
Hit Points: 41; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: N.

*Description:* Ueda Teisho is a headstrong and foolish man, ill-prepared to make his way in the world. With the death of his father, a noble man, Teisho was thrust into the world without a protector. As a result, he has had no one to conceal or explain away his indiscretions and errors. Oblivious to his own faults, Teisho feels that his misfortunes are all due to the plots and envies of others. He is obsessed with the idea that powerful enemies are seeking his destruction.

*Yen-ch'eng Tzu Yu* (Human), Many Hued Peacock Society member.  
Wu jen, 7th level 5 9 15 16 16 11  
Hit Points: 27; Typical AC: 10; Alignment: CG; Master of the Element of Water; Magical Items: scroll with *hold person*, *wall of bones*, *aiming at the target*, *vessel*, *antipathy/sympathy*, and *summoning wind*.

*Description:* A scrawny, pocked little man with patchy hair and greying skin, Yen-ch'eng presents the image of a man on the verge of death. However, on closer examination his eyes burn with an unholy vigor revealing the secret of his intense vitality. Yen-ch'eng behaves in all things like a man possessed and driven to some secret end. He occasionally intimates that he has foreseen this end. From his hints, it is apparently a violent and hideous fate. That he is fatalistic, there is no doubt. However, this very fatalism drives him to take fantastic risks and seemingly foolish gambles. To date, however, he has never been seriously harmed by any of his wild adventures.

*Yin-kung T'o* (Sea Spirit Folk), Head of Royal Vagabonds, Shou Lung merchant.  
Bushi/ninja, 7/6 10 17 8 16 16 15  
Hit Points: 35; Typical AC: 1 (-4); Alignment: LE; Magical Items: *potion of healing*, *potion of poison*, *medium shield +5*, *chain mail +1*, *horn of the tritons*, *ring of invisibility*.

*Description:* Short and sharp-featured, Yin-kung T'o is easily identified as a foreigner in Nakamura. He prides himself that he has resisted the "barbaric" ways of Wa, maintaining the dress and customs of Shou Lung. His speech is heavily accented and he often feigns unfamiliarity with the local language. He often looks like he is napping when he is actually wide-awake. To others, his attitude seems over-bearing and vain. However, in taking such an extreme position, Yin-king T'o has managed to disguise his activities as a Royal Vagabond.

#### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

As the player characters wander about Nakamaru, they are going to meet

and make the acquaintance of many NPCs who are not described in the text of this booklet. The DM will be called upon to create several bits of information about these NPCs—district, occupation, name, and personality. The tables and lists below can be used to create background information about the NPC.

*Occupation:* There are many different jobs in Nakamaru, ranging from the lowest of menial workers to the nobility of the court. While it is not likely the player characters will casually encounter a noble or highranked samurai, there are many instances where they will deal with people of lesser status. The Table below lists different occupations of the city (and the surrounding area) and the district where the NPC is likely to be found. Thus, you can select an occupation by type, district, or randomly.

Die Roll	Occupation	District(s)
01	Acrobat	Entertainment
02	Actor	Entertainment
03-04	Apothecary	Market
05-06	Armorer	Castle, samurai
07	Astrologer	Market
08-09	Basketweaver	Market
10-11	Bearer	Castle, samurai, foreign
12-13	Beggar	Market, entertainment, eta
14-15	Boatman	Shipyards, market
16	Bodyguard	Market, foreign, entertainment
17-18	Brewer	Market
19-20	Carpenter	Market, shipyard
21-22	Cotton merchant	Market
23-24	Courtesan	Entertainment
25-26	Dancer	Entertainment
27-28	Dyer	Market
29-30	Fan maker	Market
31-33	Fisherman	Market, shipyard
34	Fortune-teller	Market, entertainment
35	Gardener	Castle, samurai, market
36	Geisha	Entertainment
37-38	Groom	Castle, samurai, foreign
39	Horse-doctor	Castle, samurai
40-41	House servant	Castle, samurai, foreign
42-43	Innkeeper	Market, entertainment
44	Interpreter	Foreign
45-46	Joiner	Market, shipyard
47-48	Lacquering	Market
49-50	Messenger	Market, samurai, foreign
51-52	Money-lender	Market
53-54	Musician	Entertainment
55	Navigator	Samurai, market
56-57	Oil merchant	Market
58-59	Painter	Castle, samurai, entertainment
60-61	Paper-maker	Market
62-63	Peddler	Market
64	Poet/writer	Samurai, entertainment
65-66	Potter	Market
67	Puppeteer	Entertainment
68-69	Rice seller	Market
70	Ronin	Market, foreign
71-72	Sailor	Shipyards, market, foreign
73-74	Sake merchant	Market
75-76	Salt vendor	Market
77-78	Scribe	Market, samurai
79	Seal maker	Market
80-81	Shipwright	Shipyards, market
82-83	Silkworm grower	Market
84-85	Smith	Samurai, market
86-87	Stonemason	Market
88	Swordsmith	Samurai, market

89-90	Tanner	Eta
91-92	Teashop owner	Market, entertainment
93-94	Timber merchant	Market, shipyard
95-96	Umbrella-maker	Market
97-98	Warehouser	Market, shipyard
99-100	Weaver	Market

*Personality:* A well-played NPC is more than just a bland thing that answers questions. It is a person and should behave like one. The DM should present player characters with lively and diverse people.

If it is worthwhile to give an NPC a personality, select two traits from the list below. These can be chosen to match what has already been planned or rolled randomly (although this can create some very strange results). First roll to determine the category of the trait (Hate, Love, etc.), then roll to determine the specific trait. The first one rolled is the major trait of the NPC, and the latter is a secondary motivation.

You do not need to create a personality for every character, only those with whom the player characters have some significant business. However, if a major NPC is created for your campaign, you may want to roll for every category listed. Thus, you might have a samurai who is brutal, passionate, authoritarian, frugal, just, and steadfast. This seeming pile of contradictions could describe a hard man of intense feelings, honest and fair, but savage and unforgiving of his enemies—a formidable opponent indeed!

#### Personality Trait Table

1 Hate	2 Love
1 Cold	1 Helpful
2 Irritable	2 Good-hearted
3 Hot-tempered	3 Sympathetic
4 Mean-spirited	4 Charitable
5 Cruel	5 Passionate
6 Brutal	6 Blind
3 Power	4 Money
1 Indecisive	1 Miserly
2 Forceful	2 Greedy
3 Pompous	3 Frugal
4 Arrogant	4 Generous
5 Authoritarian	5 Extravagant
6 Tyrannical	6 Spendthrift
5 Trust	6 Fear
1 Shifty	1 Cowardly
2 Slick	2 Nervous
3 Honest	3 Swaggering
4 Just	4 Cool-headed
5 Loyal	5 Steadfast
6 Virtuous	6 Fearless

*Physical Description:* For most NPC's, who only have a short existence in the game, a physical description is the least important part of the character. However, for significant NPC's, you may want to describe the character to create a lasting picture. Choose or roll randomly for as many physical traits as you would like (although random results will sometimes create contradictions).

<i>Die Roll</i>	<i>Physical feature</i>		
01-02	Baby-faced	51-52	Loud
03-04	Balding	53-54	Mute
05-06	Bearded	55-56	Nasal voice
07-08	Blind	57-58	Pale
09-10	Broad-shouldered	59-60	Plump
11-12	Buck-toothed	61-62	Pock-marked
13-14	Deaf	63-64	Scarred
15-16	Dowdy	65-66	Short
		67-68	Sleepy

17-18	Fat	69-70	Slender
19-20	Fine-featured	71-72	Small
21-22	Florid	73-74	Squinty
23-24	Gangly	75-76	Stiff
25-26	Gap-toothed	77-78	Stocky
27-28	Goggle-eyed	79-80	Stooped
29-30	Gouty	81-82	Stutter
31-32	Grizzled	83-84	Tall
33-34	Guttural	85-86	Thin
35-36	Hairy	87-88	Thin-lipped
37-38	Hard of hearing	89-90	Toothless
39-40	High-pitched voice	91-92	Twitchy
41-42	Hulking	93-94	Wasted
43-44	Jug-eared	95-96	Weather-beaten
45-46	Lanky	97-98	Wizened
47-48	Limp	99-100	Wrinkled
49-50	Lisp		

*Names:* Naming an NPC might be necessary, especially if he or she is going to be around for a while. The best way to name a character is to take a name from history or a book on the Orient. Otherwise, create your own name or use the lists that appear here and in *OA 1: Swords of the Daimyo*. The list below contains first names only and does not separate them by sex. Simply choose the name you prefer among those given.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Ai	Indigo, love
Aka	Red
Akasuke	Bright helper
Aki	Autumn
Asa	Morning, shallow
Atsu	Generous
Au	Meeting
Ben	Petal
Bun	Well-written
Chie	Intelligence
Chitose	1000 years
Chiyo	1000 generations
Chizu	1000 storks
Chu	Loyalty
Dai	Great
E	Fortunate
Ei	Clever, blooming
En	Charm
Etsu	Delight
Fude	Writing brush
Fuku	Good fortune, clothing
Fumi	Woman's letter
Fune	Ship
Fusa	Tassel
Fuyu	Winter
Gin	Silver
Hama	Shore
Han	Half
Hana	Blossom
Haru	Spring
Hatsu	First born
Haya	Quick
Hide	Excellent
Hideyo	Superior generations
Hiro	Broad
Hisano	Long plain
Ichi	One
Iku	Nourishing
Ima	Now
Iro	Color

Isamu	Robust	Ren	Lotus arranger
Ishi	Stone	Rettsu	Chaste and true
Iwa	Rock	Riku	Ground
Jin	Humanity	Roku	Six
Jun	Obedient	Ryo	Dragon, generous
Kaede	Maple leaf	Ryu	Willow, lofty
Kagami	Mirror	Sada	Chaste
Kaiyo	Forgiveness	Sai	Talented
Kama	Sickle	Saki	Cape
Kame	Tortoise	Saku	Composition
Kan	Patience	San	Three
Kaoru	Fragrant	Sanae	New rice
Kasane	Manifold	Sawa	Marsh
Katsu	Victorious	Sayo	Night
Kazashi	Hairpin	Seki	Gate, barrier
Kazu	Great number	Sen	Spirit, fairy
Ken	Humility, wise	Setsu	True
Kevi	Respectful	Shichi	Seven
Kiku	Chrysanthemum	Shidzu	Calmer
Kikue	Chrysanthemum branch	Shika	Deer
Kikumo	Chrysanthemum field	Shikae	Deer bay
Kimi	Sovereign, peerless	Shimo	Frost
Kin	Gold	Shin	Truth
Kinu	Cloth-of-Silk	Shina	Goods, virtue
Kishi	Beach	Shino	Slender bamboo
Kiwa	Distinguished, Mulberry tree	Shiwo	Salt
Kiyō	Happy generations, pure	Shun	Excellent
Kōi	Carp	Some	Dyer
Kome	Clean rice	Suge	Reed
Kon	Deep blue	Sugi	Cedar
Koto	Harp	Sute	Foundling
Kuma	Bear	suzu	Little bell, tin
Kumi	Braid	Suzue	Branch of little bells
Kuni	Capital	Tae	Exquisite
Kura	Storehouse	Taka	Honor, hawk
Kuri	Chestnut	Take	Bamboo
Maki	Fir	Tama	Jewel
Maru	Plump	Tamaki	Ring, bracelet
Masa	Upright	Tane	Seed
Masago	Sand	Tani	Valley
Masayo	Generations of the just	Taru	Cask
Masue	Branch of increase	Tatsu	Dragon
Matsu	Pine	Teru	Shining
Matsue	Pine branch	Tetsu	Iron
Mie	Triple branch	Tokiwa	Forever constant
Mika	New moon	Toku	Virtue
Mikie	Main branch	Tomi	Riches
Mine	Peak	Tomiju	Wealth and longevity
Mitsue	Shining branch	Tomo	Friend
Miyo	Beautiful generations	Tora	Tiger
Miyuki	Deep snow	Tori	Bird
Momo	Peach	Toshi	Arrowhead
Mura	Village	Toyo	Abundance
Nami	Wave	Tsugi	Next born
Nao	Upright	Tsuki	Moon
Nara	Oak	Tsune	Constant
Nari	Thunder-clap	Tsuru	Stork
Natsu	Summer	Tsuta	Ivy
Nishi	West	Tsuya	Lustrous
Nobu	Fidelity	Ume	Plum blossom
Nui	Tapestry	Umegae	Plum spray
Orino	Weaver's field	Umeno	Plum field
Rai	Trust, thunder	Uta	Song
Raku	Pleasure	Waka	Young
Ran	Orchid	Washi	Eagle
Rei	Propriety	Yae	Eight-fold

Yasu	Amiable, gentle, tranquil
Yoi	Evening
Yone	Rice, wealth
Yoshi	Good
Yoshina	Fertile field
Yoshino	Good friend
Yotsu	Four
Yu	Valiant
Yuki	Snow
Yumi	Bow
Yuri	Lily

#### USING THE CITY MAP

Included in this module is a large fold-out mapsheet showing the city of Nakamaru. Unlike many maps, the city is not portrayed in an overhead view showing blocks and streets. Instead, the map is done to give you an idea of the arrangement and look of Nakamaru. It shows the major districts, streets and buildings, but does not present every detail. Furthermore, only a few of the buildings or blocks are identified. Many places alluded to or mentioned in the different plots are not placed on the map. Deciding the location of each place is your task. Your decisions give you an avenue to create and embellish your own details into the city. A city is a very personal thing in a role-playing campaign, and you should have the opportunity to make Nakamaru what you want it to be.

Indeed, vast details about Nakamaru are left unanswered. There is no complete listing of every building and every place. There is not even an exact idea of the population of the city. You must decide, although it is likely to be somewhere between 100,000 to 200,000 souls at a minimum. Oriental cities of the time were commonly more populated than their western counterparts. Edo (the old name for Tokyo) was perhaps the largest city in the world in 1700, with a population around 1,000,000. However, it is impossible to know exact figures. The end result is that you must personalize Nakamaru by making decisions and adding details. As you add to the city, it will increase in value and usefulness as a base of operations for your *ORIENTAL ADVENTURES* campaign.

When characters move about the city, use the Nakamaru map as a general guide to their location. As noted above, this map does not show every street. There are numerous small alleys, arcades, and twisting streets that run through the different blocks. Thus, how characters reach various points is seldom important. The only areas of carefully controlled access are the outer gates, the moat crossings, and the entrances to the castle. The smaller blocks are filled with activity, as the Entertainment Block Map shows. Use this map and others to fill in the details of Nakamaru.

#### NEW MONSTERS

**MEN-SHEN** (Greater Spirits).

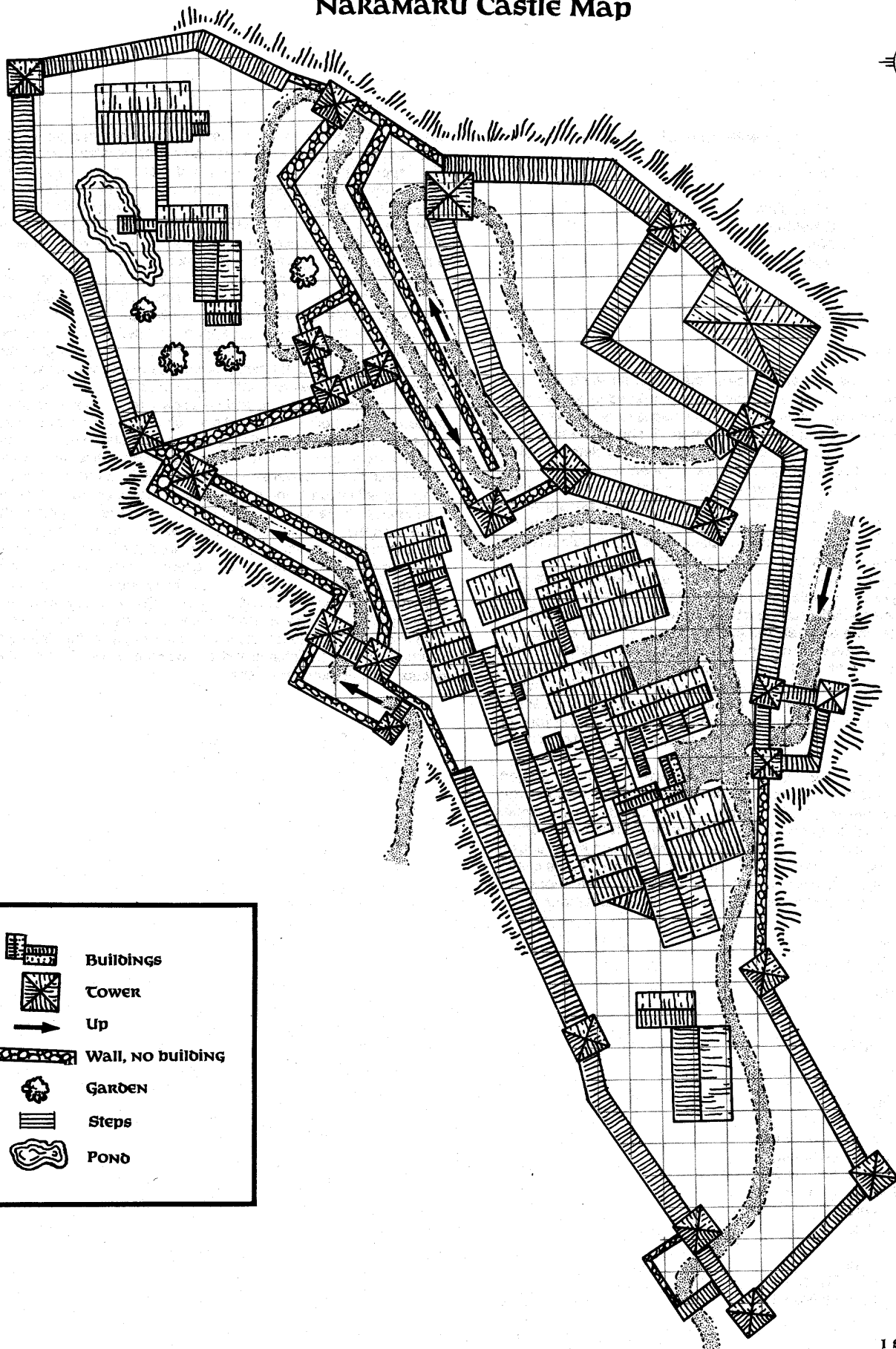
FREQUENCY: Very rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 1-2  
 ARMOR CLASS: -2  
 MOVE: 12"/12" (MC: A)  
 HIT DICE: 10  
 % IN LAIR: Nil  
 TREASURE TYPE: Nil  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8+4/1-8+4  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 INTELLIGENCE: Very  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 SIZE: L (8')  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
 ATTACK/DEFENSE MODES: Nil  
 LEVEL/XP. VALUE: VII/2700 + 14/hp

Men-shen are guardian spirits, assigned by those they serve to protect a place or person against intruders, evil spirits, or whatever else is named. They appear as florid-faced humans of great size, dressed in the regalia of an army general. Each carries a large red sword. They are able to speak the languages of all men and the language of the Celestial Court. They are sometimes assigned by the Celestial Emperor to specific tasks, but are more often invoked or summoned by mortals. Their guardian duties normally only extend from dusk to dawn.

Men-shen have the ability to fly, become astral, and become invisible at will. Furthermore, they can attack while invisible as per improved invisibility. They are able to polymorph self twice per day. Their fierce countenances have the effect of an apparition spell on their enemies. Their swords are +4 on "to hit" and damage rolls, but must return daily to the Celestial realms to retain their potency. Each day spent away from these realms causes the sword to lose 1 point from its "to hit" bonus. Men-shen are immune to fear, charm, and hold spells of all types and take only half or no damage from magic spells which cause points of damage. They have continual ESP (30' radius) and cannot be surprised by anything within this area. They will faithfully discharge their duties unto death.

The first men-shen were originally famous generals of a good emperor. When he fell ill due to the nightly visits of an evil dragon, these generals volunteered to stand watch at his door. For several nights nothing happened, yet they never deserted their posts or slept. Finally, the emperor, concerned for his generals, ordered paintings of the two done on the door posts. So effective had been their vigilance that even the paintings served to frighten the dragon away. Now the two reside in the Celestial Palace, supervising the activities of all men-shen. So were they rewarded for their loyalty and faithfulness. Since that time, mortals have painted the images of men-shen on the doorposts of houses in hopes of frightening away evil spirits. There is a 5% chance that any painted image of a men-shen will be occupied by an astral men-shen.

# Nakamaru Castle Map

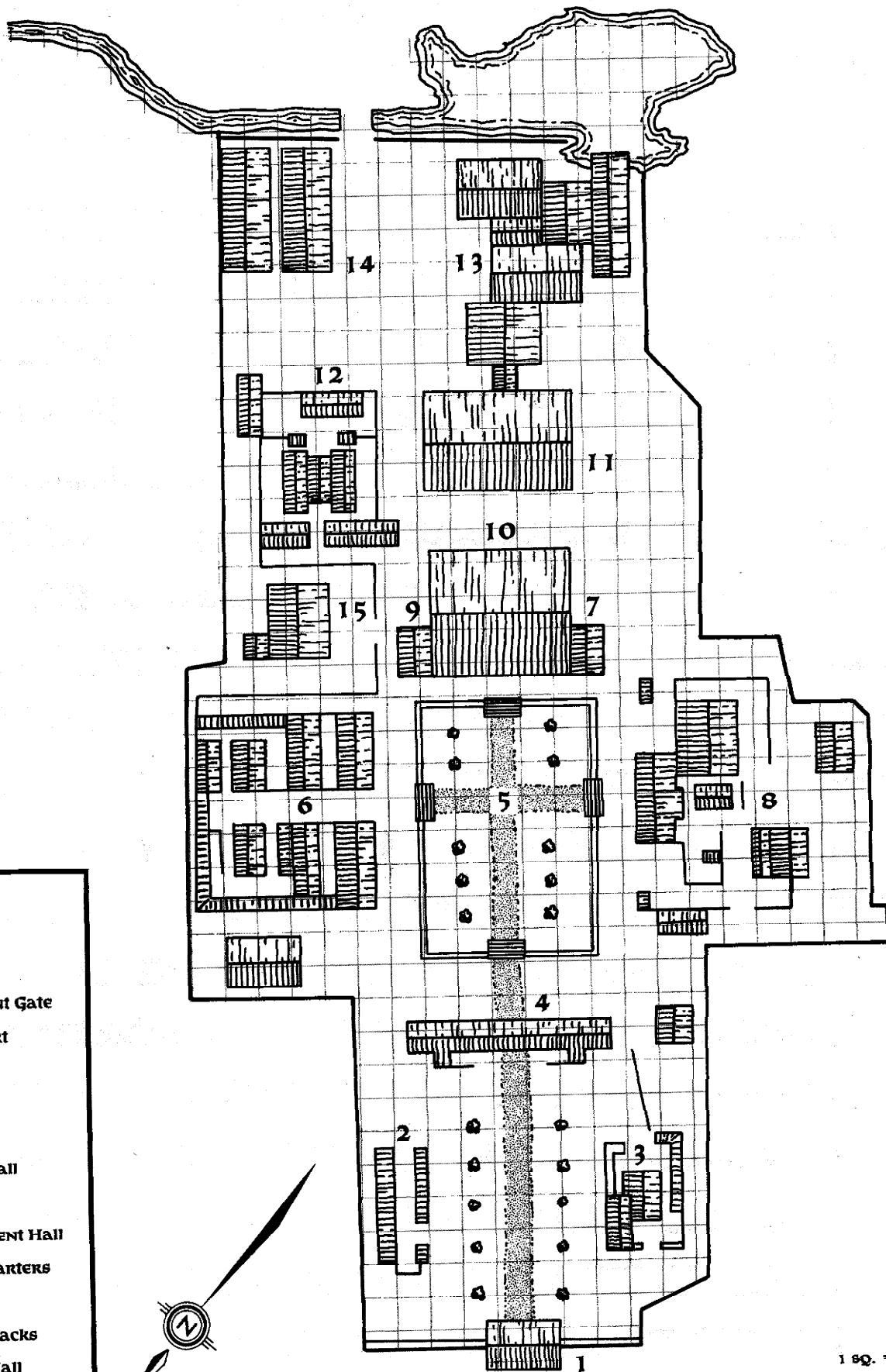


	Buildings
	TOWER
	Up
	Wall, no building
	GARDEN
	Steps
	POND

1 SQ. = 50'



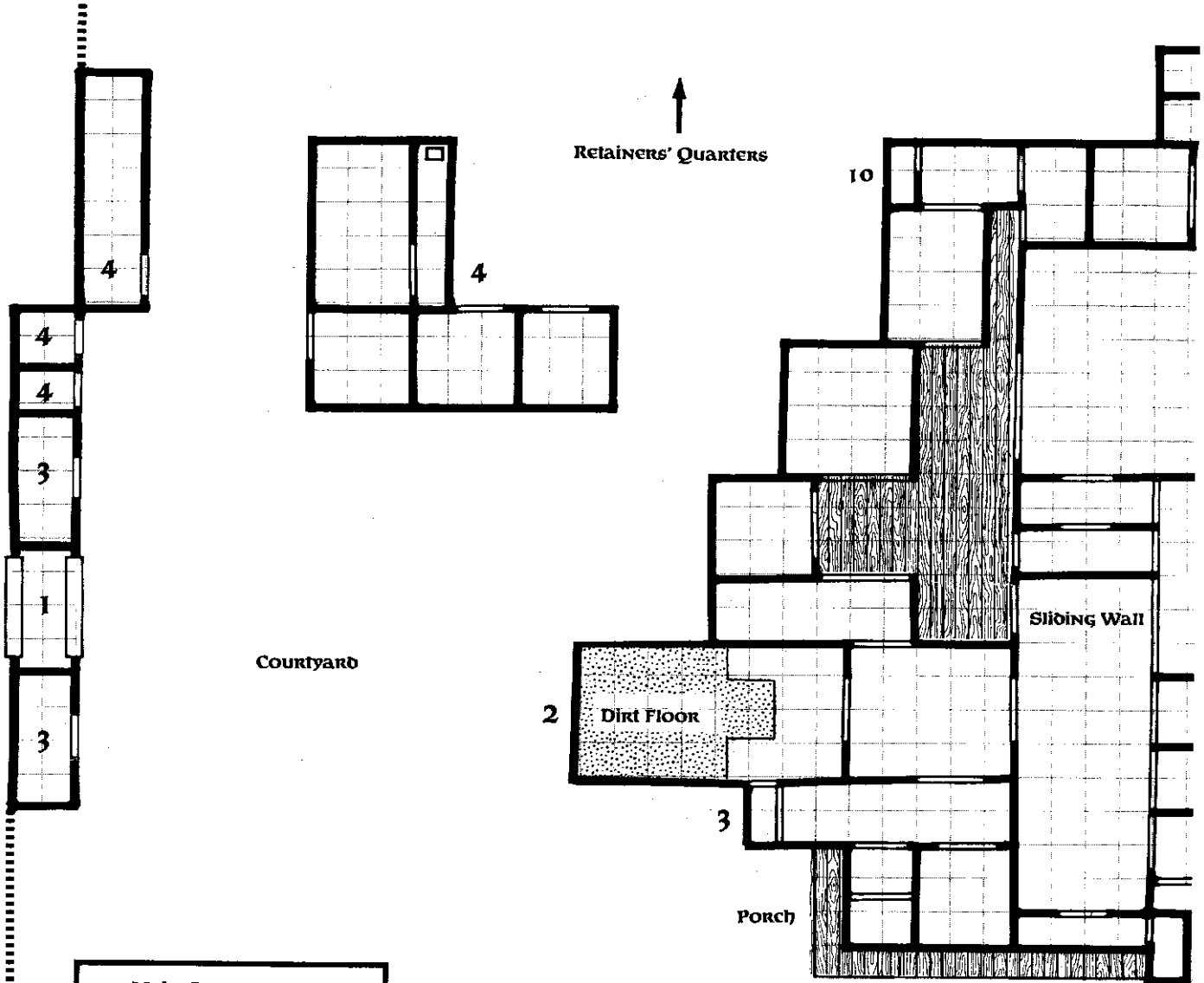
# Winter Sect Temple Map



1. Main Gate
2. Latrine
3. Bath House
4. Enlightenment Gate
5. Central Court
6. Monastery
7. Lecture Hall
8. Kitchens
9. Founder's Hall
10. Main Hall
11. Enlightenment Hall
12. Abbot's Quarters
13. Guest Hall
14. Sohei Barracks
15. Training Hall

1 sq. = 50'

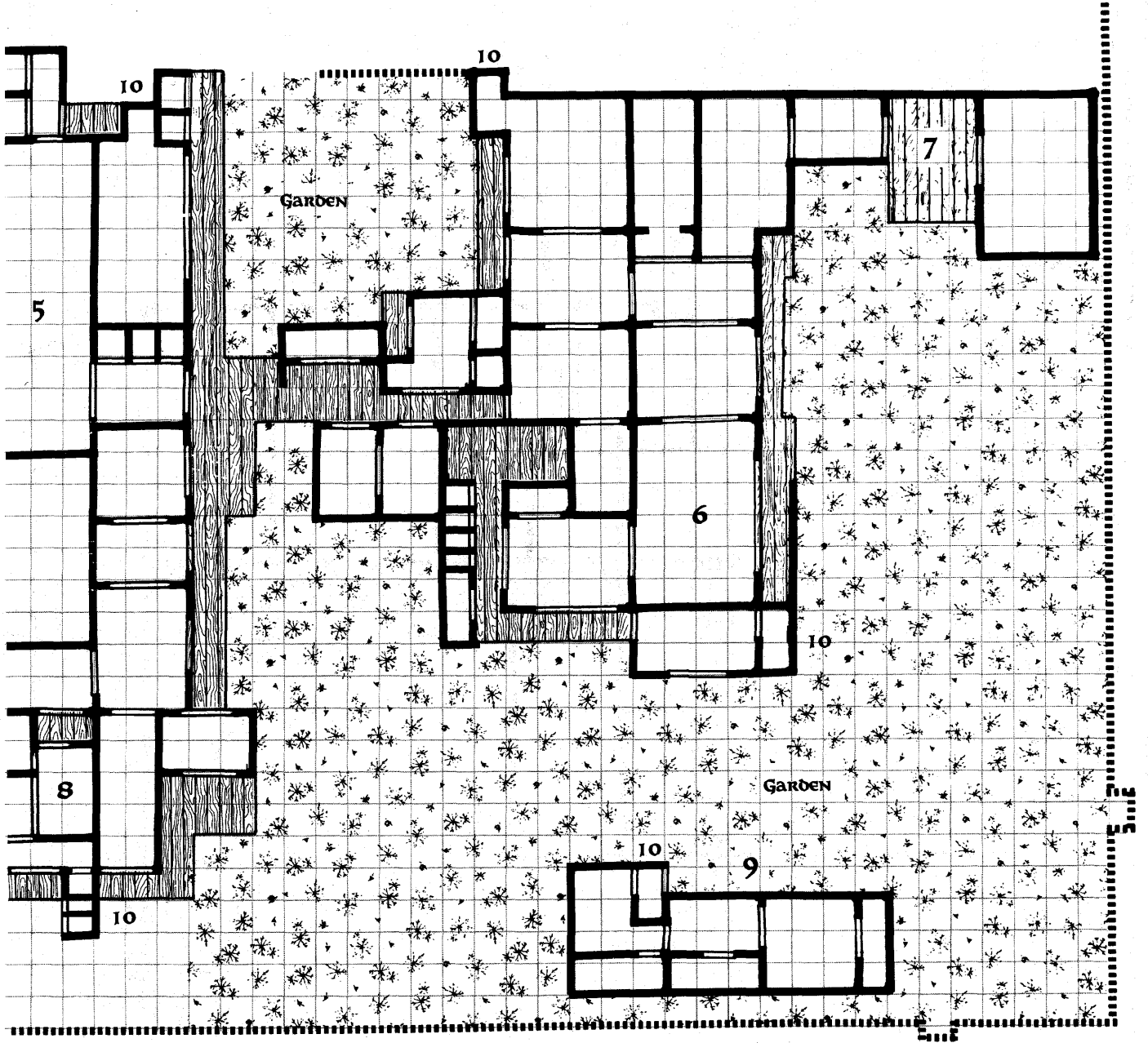
# Wealthy Samurai Compound (Main House)



- 1. Main Gate
- 2. Entrance
- 3. Guard House
- 4. Servant's Quarters
- 5. Kitchen
- 6. Reception Hall
- 7. Moon-viewing platform
- 8. Guest Rooms
- 9. Ladies' Apartments
- 10. Latrines

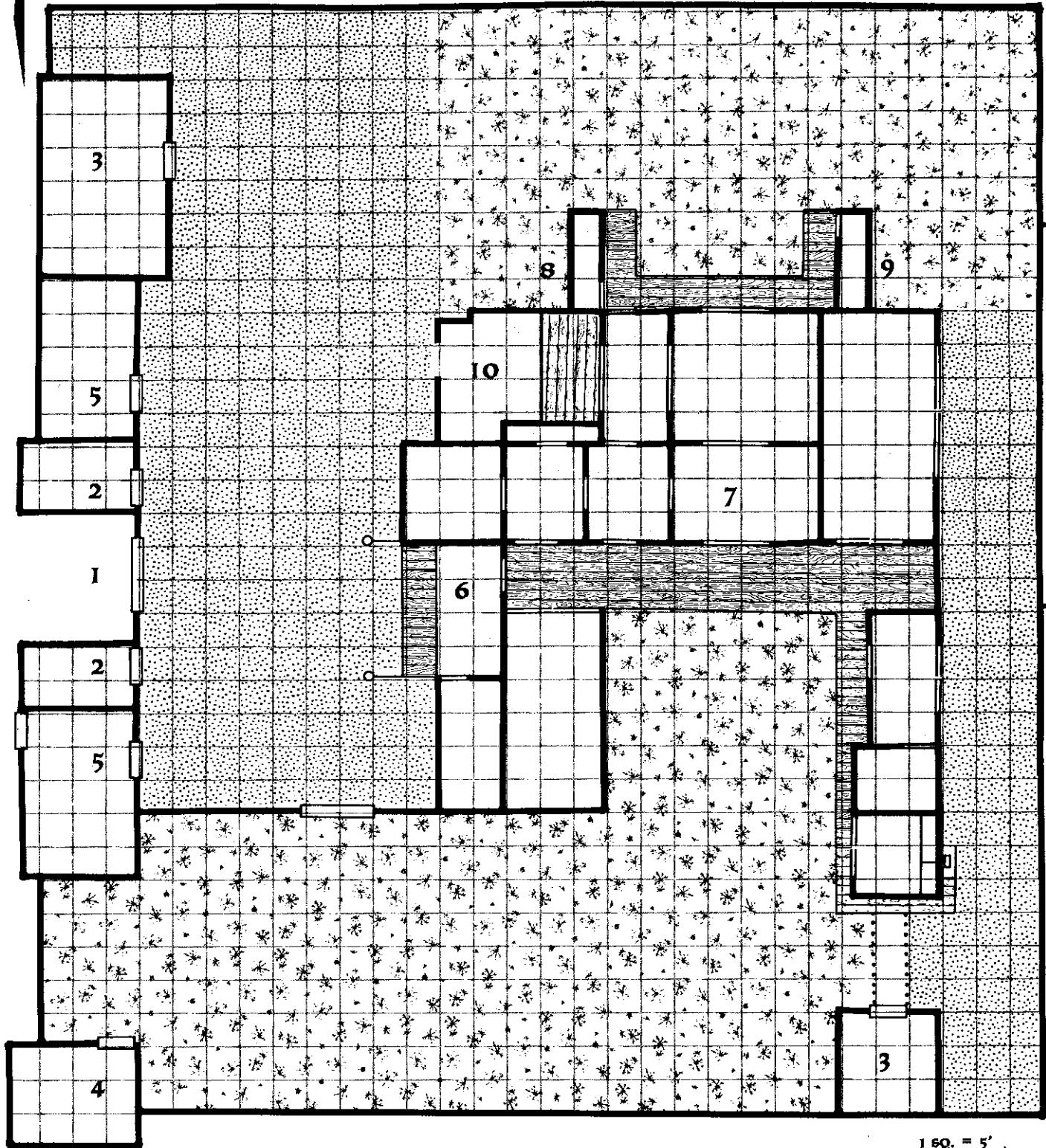


Retainers' Quarters  
↓



1 SQ. = 5'

# Middle-Class Samurai Residence

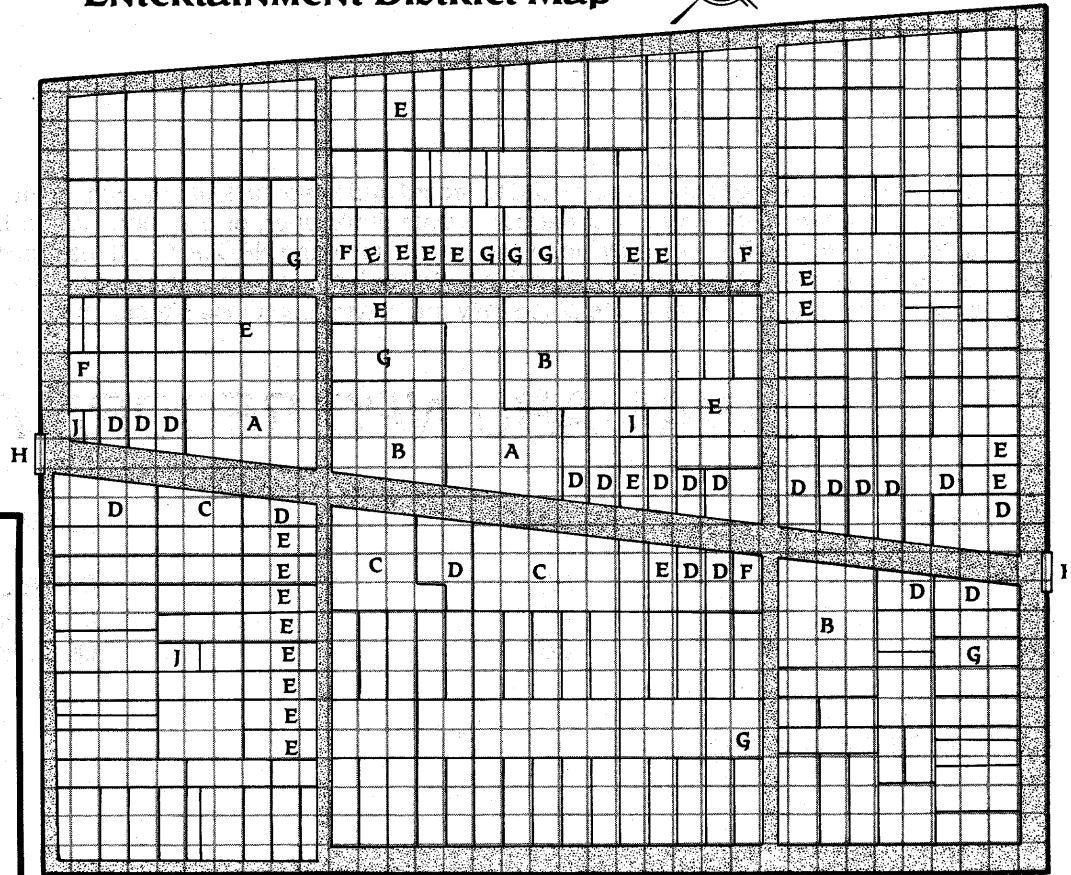


1 sq. = 5'

# Entertainment District Map



- A: Theater
- B: Puppet Theater
- C: Gambling House, high class
- D: First-class Tea House
- E: Lower-class Tea House
- F: Bath
- G: Lower-class Gambling House
- H: Ward Gate
- J: Firetower

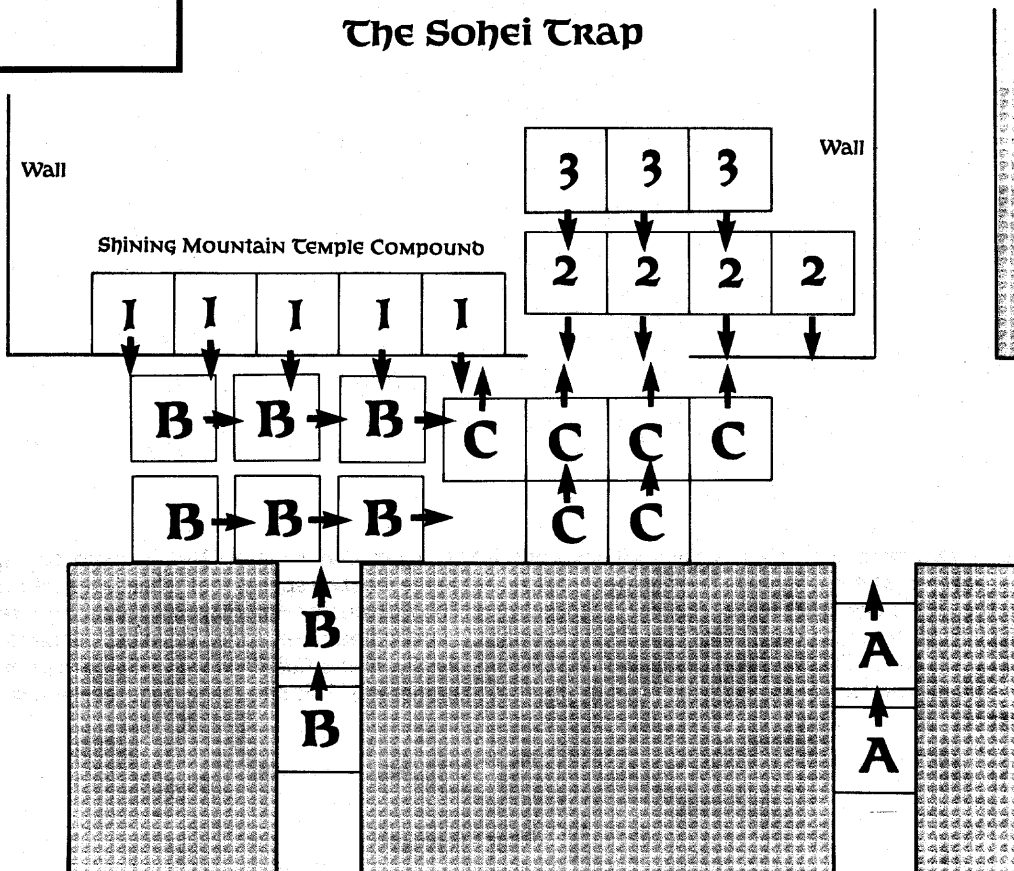


(1 sq. = 10')

- Middle-Class Samurai Residence**
1. Main Gate
  2. Guard House
  3. Store House
  4. Watchtower (2 stories)
  5. Retainers' Quarters
  6. Entry
  7. Reception Hall (Shoin)
  8. Bath
  9. Latrine
  10. Kitchen

## The Sohei Trap

- 1: BOWMEN
- 2: Sohei
- 3: Bushi
- A: Elite Sohei
- B: 1st Level Sohei
- C: 3rd Level Sohei



*NPC Record:* The following forms can be used to record and keep track of any significant NPC's you create. It is not necessary to fill out the form for every street beggar, urchin, innkeeper, or common laborer the player characters encounter. Instead, this form should be used only when you want to keep the NPC on file. It may be that you worked out a particularly entertaining personality when you role-played the NPC or it may be that the player characters are going to deal frequently with the NPC (i.e., the innkeeper at the place they are staying). In these situations, you will want a record of the NPC.

# **NAKAMARU NPC RECORD FORM**

<b>NPC NAME:</b>	<b>RACE:</b>	<b>CLASS:</b>
<b>ST:</b>	<b>IN:</b>	<b>DISTRICT:</b>
<b>DX:</b>	<b>WI:</b>	<b>LOCATION:</b>
<b>CN:</b>	<b>CH:</b>	<b>OCCUPATION:</b>

**ABILITIES OR KNOWLEDGE:**

**PERSONALITY ROLE-PLAYED:**

**RELATIONS WITH PCs:**

**NOTABLE EVENTS:**

*Note:* If the NPC has a *character class*, note the class and level in the space provided. Note the NPC's home district in the *district* space and, if there is a specific place where this character can be found, note it in the *location* space. Indicate all special abilities, unusual skills, or secret knowledge the NPC possesses under *Abilities or Knowledge*. The *Personality RolePlayed* space aids in remembering how the NPC was handled when you acted his part. Note any distinctive habits, speech patterns, tones of voice, gestures, or mannerisms you used when role-playing the NPC. This way you can play the part consistently. In the *Relations with PCs* space note the NPC's attitude toward the player characters (actions or statements made by the PCs in particular). This should be updated each time the player characters encounter the NPC.



## Using the Master Family Chart

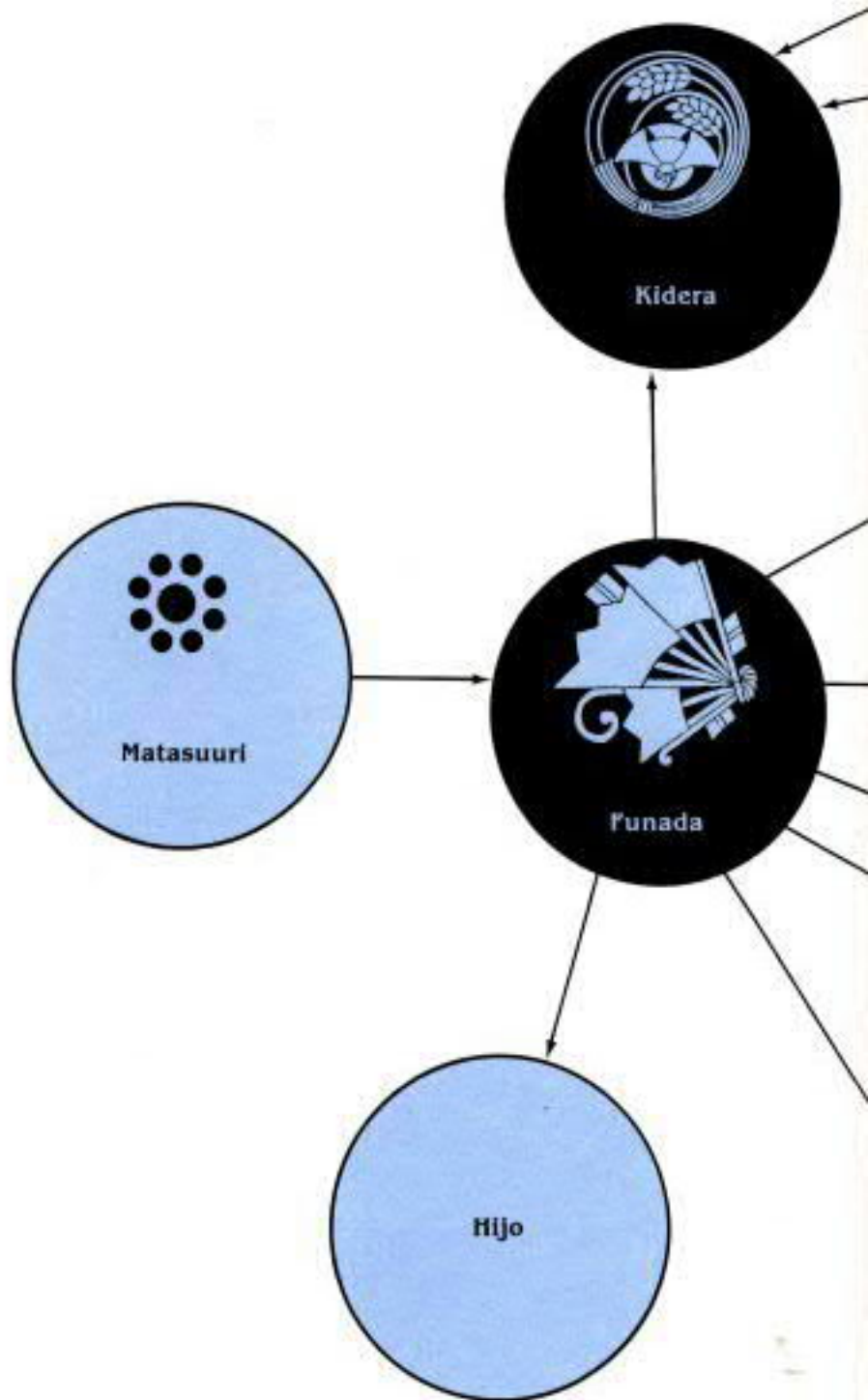
The Master Family Chart shows the different relationships of the influential families of Nakamaru and the surrounding area. Each family is identified by its name and monogata. The monogata is the crest or family seal, much like the heraldry of the European knight. Through it, others are able to quickly recognize the affiliation of the person wearing the badge. Monogata are used by family members and their retainers in most circumstances.

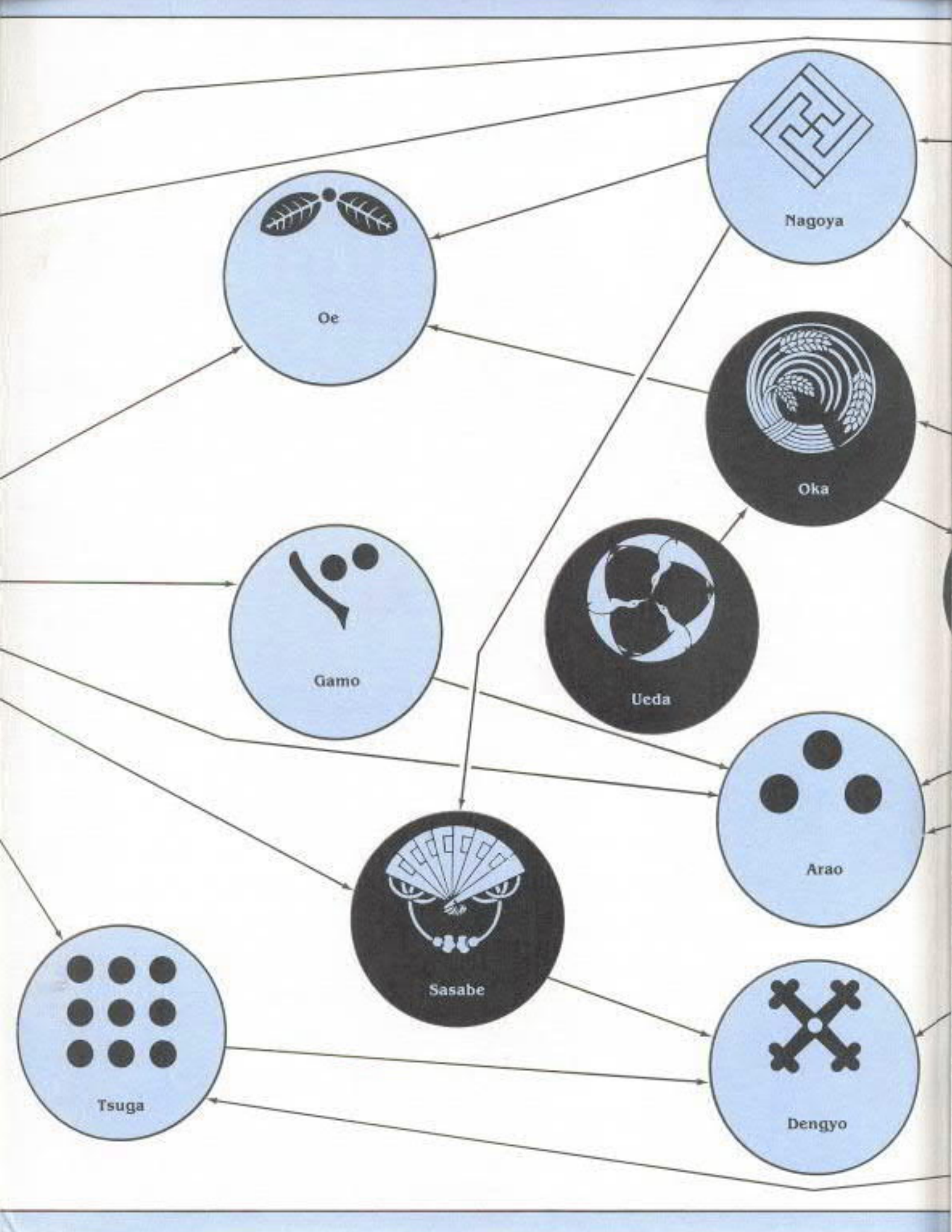
The arrowed lines show who owes obligation or service to whom. All the arrows pointing out from a family show who owes them or whom they can make requests of. Thus, the Matsuuri (the shogun's family) can demand service of the Funada. The arrows present a complicated web of loyalties and allegiances. Some of these exist from blood relations and marriages. Others are obligations incurred by ancient friendships and alliances or the sheer sense of duty and honor.

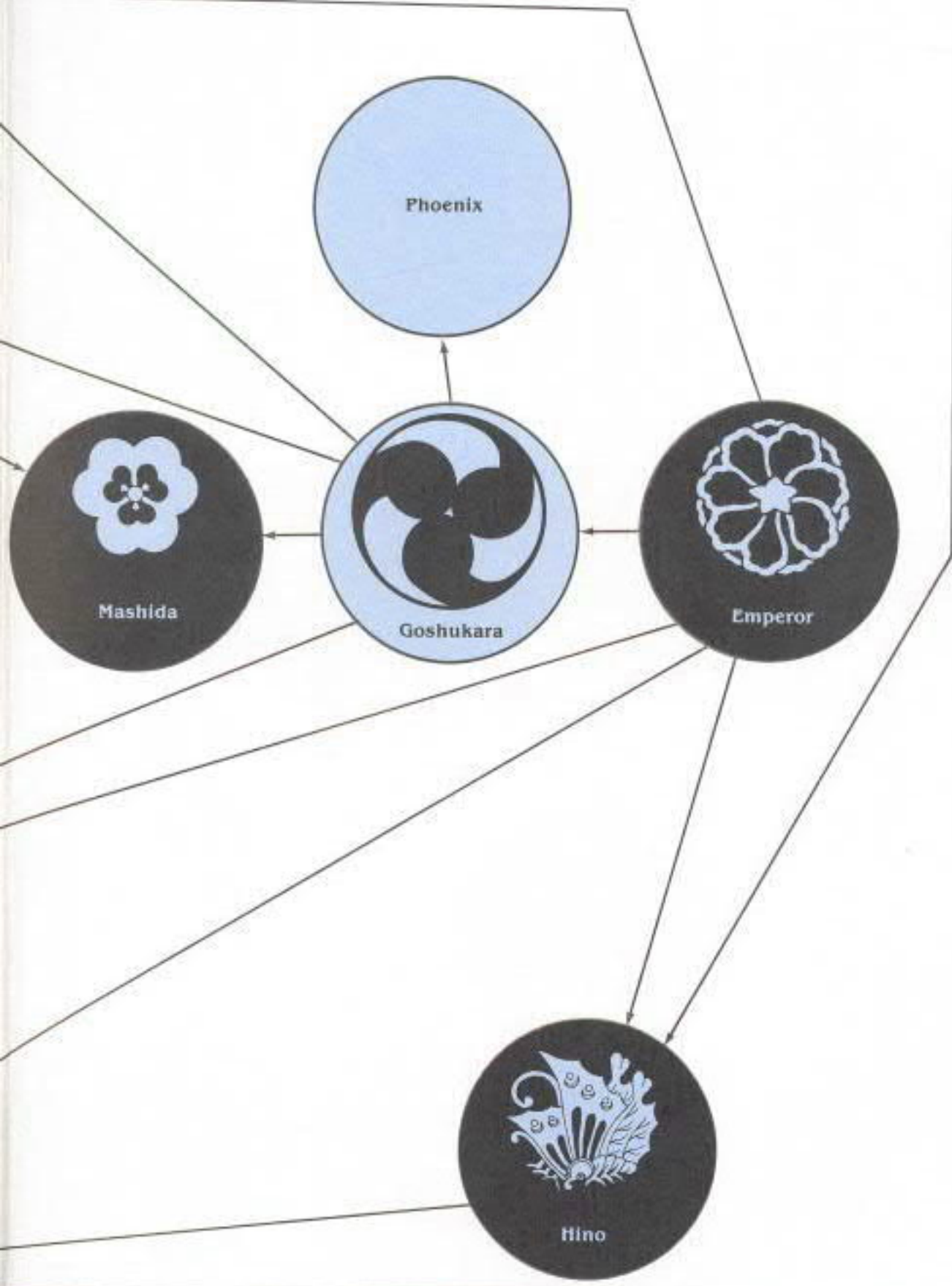
You can use this chart to keep track of the web of allegiances of the different families as you play the plots of this module. Furthermore, player characters can elect to belong to these families for their background (subject, of course, to DM approval). A player character samurai could choose to belong to the Arao family, for instance, and would immediately be placed within the network of loyalties shown.

Furthermore, clever use of the information on this chart can increase dramatic tension and colorful descriptions. When different families meet, you might check the chart to see if there is any relationship between them. Those with strong ties to the Funada might be hostile or suspicious of families with direct ties to the Goshukara or the Emperor. If you frequently describe the monogata to the player characters, they will begin to identify families by their crests. This identification will strengthen the colorful feel of the campaign for your player characters.

The Master Family Chart is arranged to reflect the current power struggle in Nakamaru. At one end is the Matsuuri/Funada power group—the forces of the shogun. At the other end is the Goshukara/Emperor group, their fierce rivals. In between are the lesser families. The connections between them give an idea of the power each side might be able to muster in an open conflict.



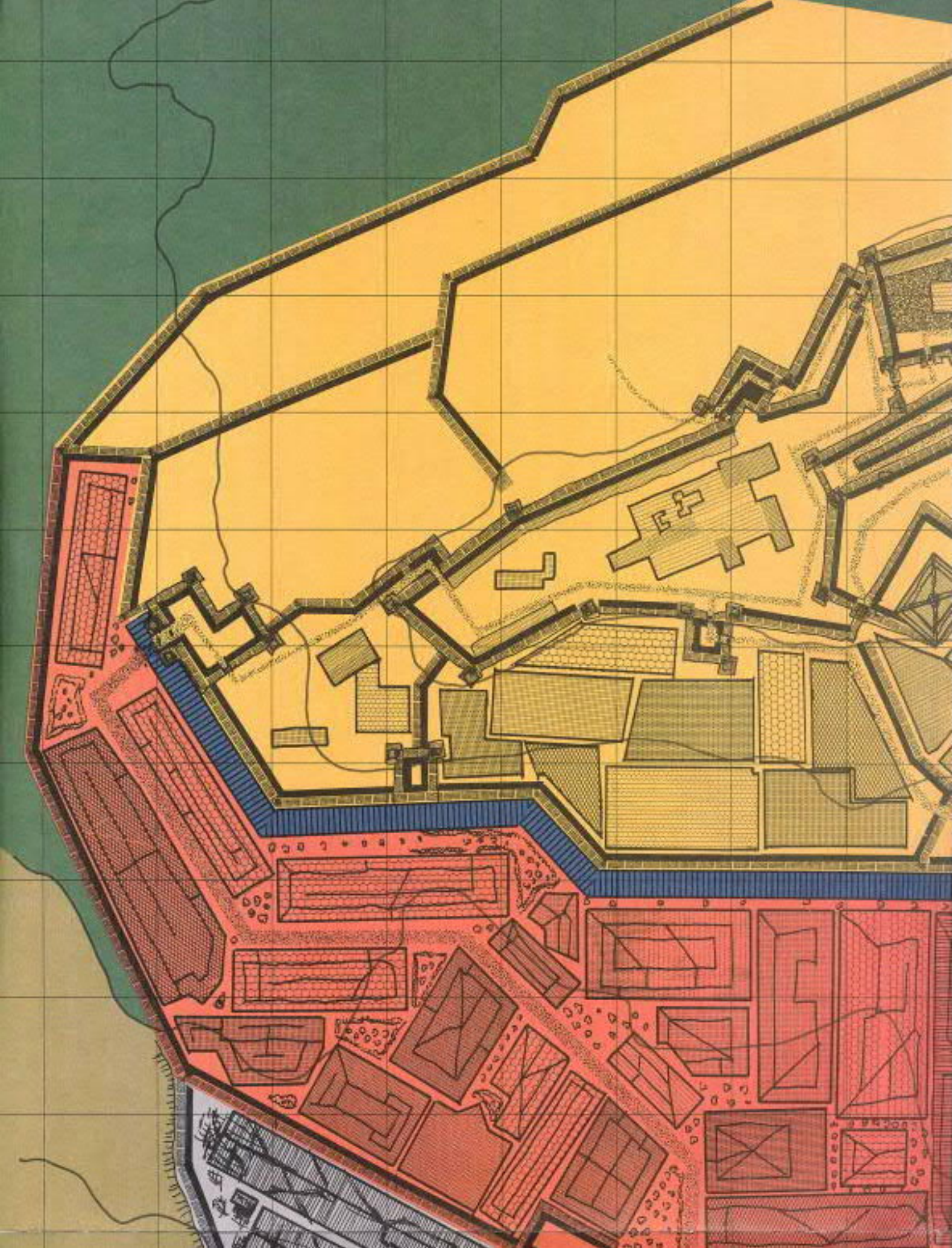




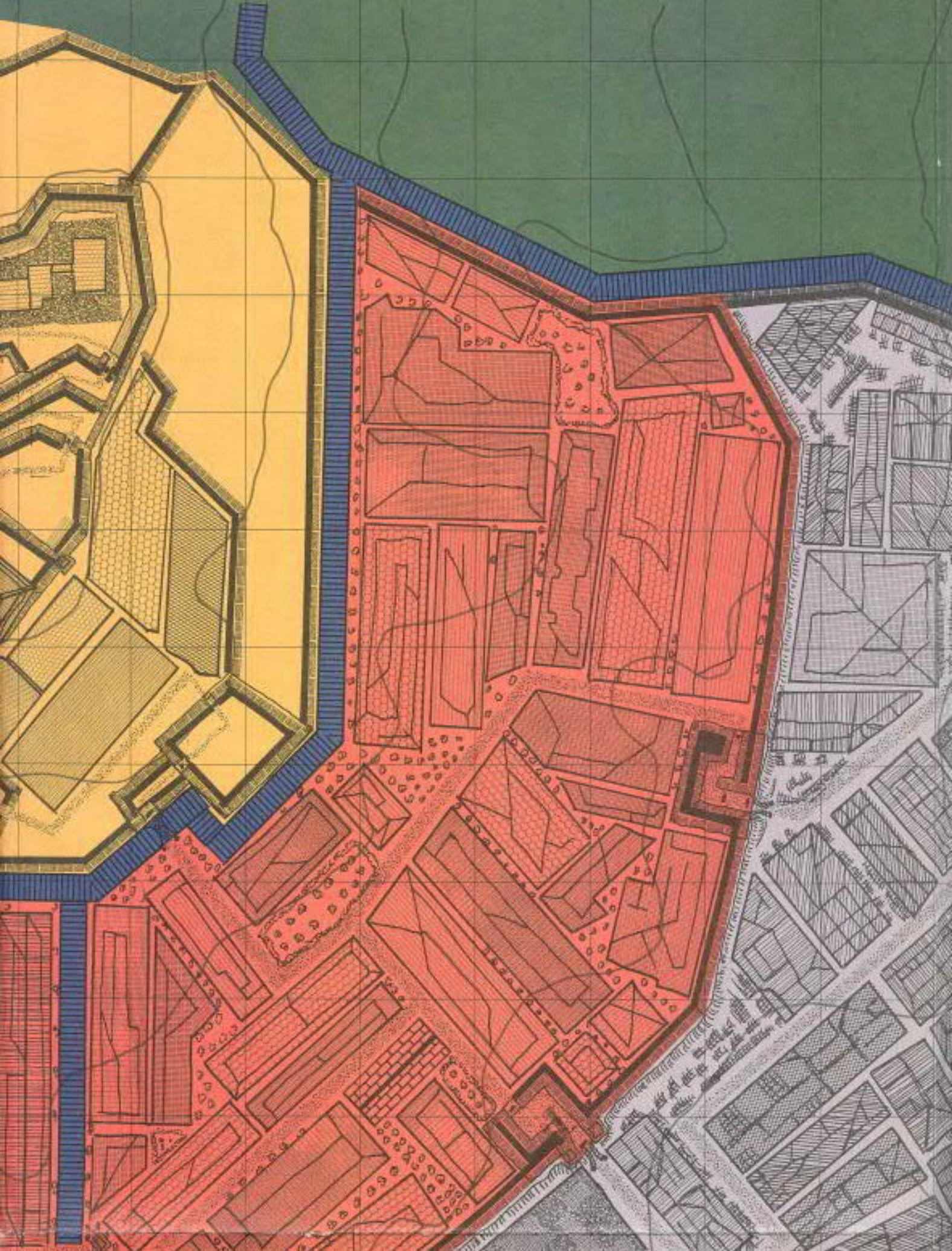




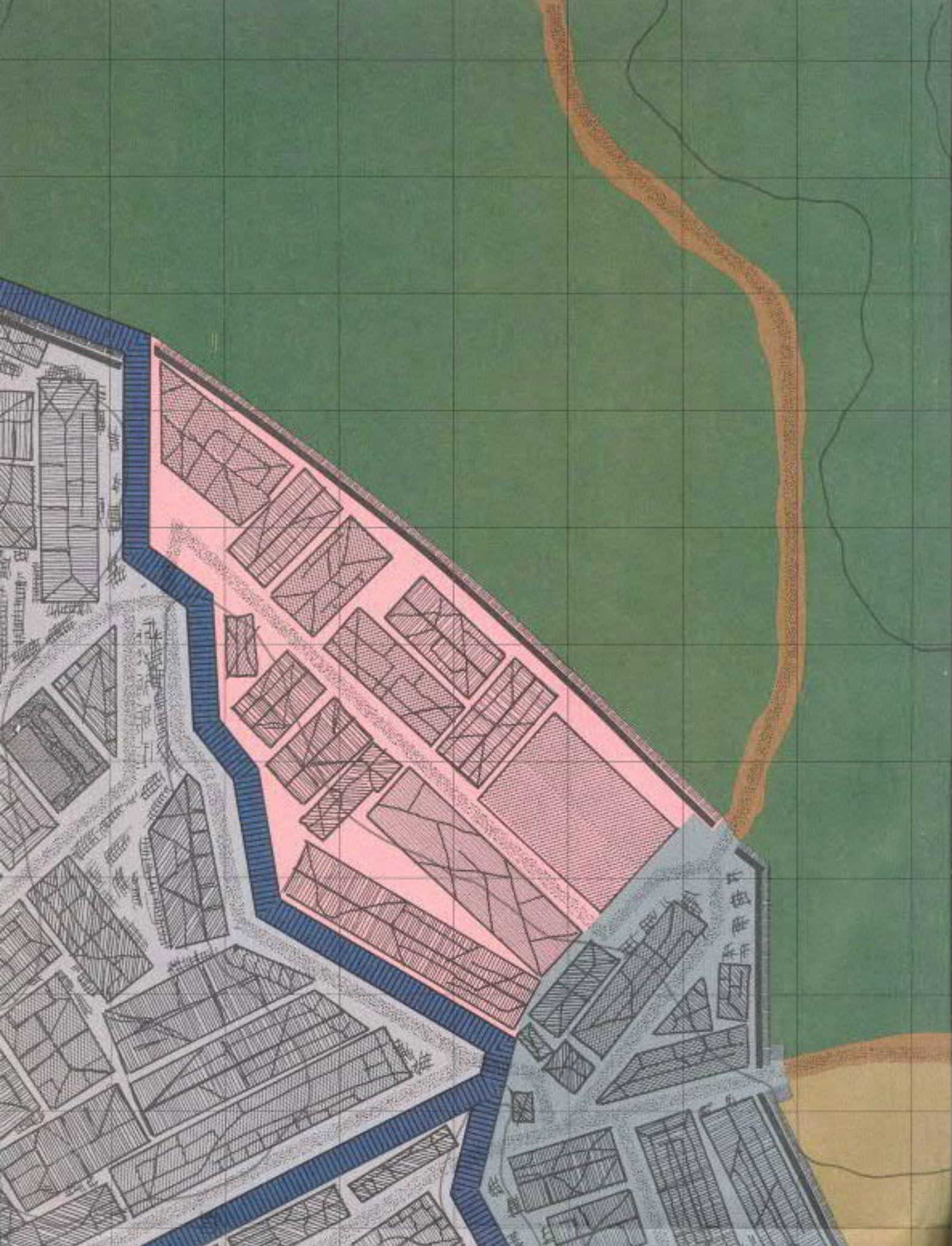
















Eta Village



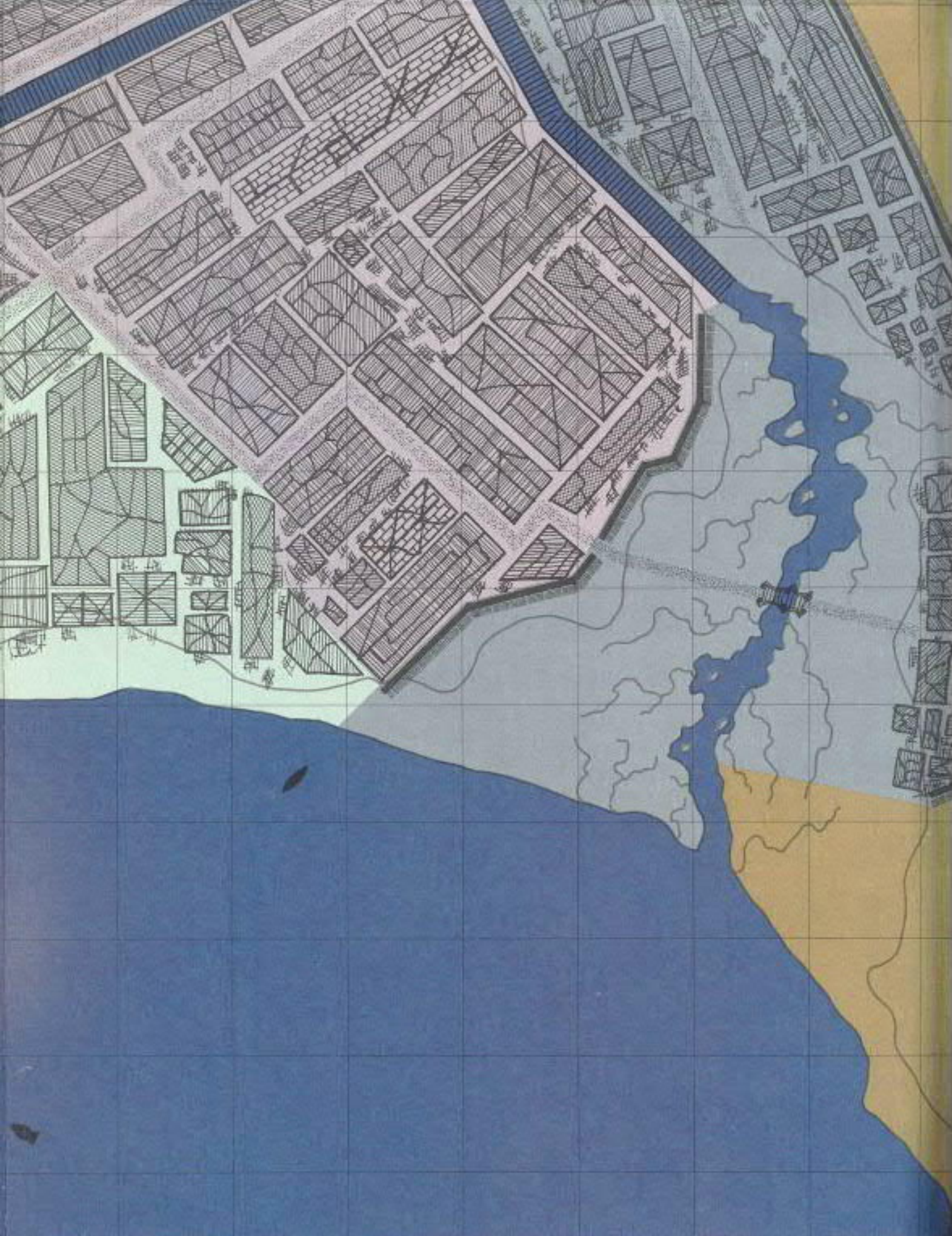


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# The City of Nakamaru

Key

1 sq. = 300'

-  Castle District
-  Samurai District
-  Market District
-  Entertainment District
-  Foreign District
-  Shipyard
-  Canal
-  Wall
-  Major Street





Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

OFFICIAL GAME ADVENTURE

# Oriental Adventures

## Blood of the Yakuza

by David "Zeb" Cook

In the port city of Nakamaru, the masks of deceit and treachery embroil the entire city. Plots and counterplots, loyalties, revenge . . . all can be found in this city of Wa.

You have been thrust amidst this cauldron of intrigue. You must pick your loyalties with care. Will you side with one of the yakuza gangs in their secret battle for control of the streets? Will you throw your fate into the political whirlwind that surrounds the powerful families of Nakamaru? Will you sohei battle his rivals for the hearts of the people?

*Blood of the Yakuza* is an adventure for use in your *Oriental Adventures* campaign. It includes a colorful city map of Nakamaru and descriptions of the major NPCs, districts, and factions of the city. All of these make Nakamaru an exciting and dangerous place for adventure!

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