

# A Gazetteer of Myoshima

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The booklet you are reading details the Empire of Myoshima, a Rakasta nation located on the moon of Patera. The goal is to make the Empire a viable setting for an OD&D or AD&D campaign.

This section introduces the motivations, challenges and inspirations of the present work, as well as a bibliography of the sources used in writing it. The rest of the work describes the history and geography of Myoshima, and presents the rules for Myoshiman Player Characters.

### 1.1 Motivation

The Empire of Myoshima is one of the largest nations on Patera, the invisible moon that orbits around Mystara. It is also one of the most powerful rivals of the Known World empires, given its impressive army of Rakasta warriors mounted on flying sabretooth tigers.

Yet, the entire amount of canon information on the subject is limited to a single paragraph presentation of the nation, and a few NPCs appearing in the Voyage of the Princess Ark series. In short, Myoshima is one of the most underdeveloped areas of the game world, yet one of the most promising.

### 1.2 Challenges and Inspirations

One of the most striking issues with Myoshima as a campaign setting, and with Patera in general, is

the absence of humans. The almost entire population of the hidden moon is composed of Rakasta and Pachydermions, so even traditional demihumans are not available.

The choice taken in this work is to go fully with the furry fantasy genre – other PC races available include therefore the birdlike Tengu, the spider shapechanger Aranea, and the apelike Sasquatch. Luckily, Rakasta behave more or less like humans in rule terms, while demihumans can be replaced by monstrous races (as per the Player Crucible books). One of the big problem with mixing a pseudo-Japanese setting with furry fantasy is that many creatures of Japanese mythology and folklore are themselves based on animals (e.g., the tanuki, bakeneko, kitsune), and especially shapechanging animals. So, we would have a lot of shapechanging animals who would actually shapechange into cat-headed humanoids... The choice here has been to drop the quasi-lycanthropic species of AD&D Oriental Adventures, the Hengey-oukai, avoid real lycanthropes (who have no oriental feel at all), and use existing D&D shapechangers that could more easily fit the setting, specifically Pooka, Aranea and Drakes.

As for inspiration, beyond the obvious AD&D sources (covered in next section), Japanese anime had a lot of weight here – takes on some classes (e.g., the Shinobi are somewhat based on the *Naruto* anime) or creatures (the Tanuki, for example) draw more or less explicitly from such sources.

Last, but definitely not least, a number of existing articles on Myoshima from the Vaults of Pandius has been taken into account. Specifically, the history of

Myoshima is based on the existing Timeline of Patera by Andrew Theisen, supplemented with information and characters from the Hollow Moon works by Sharon Dornhoff and from the Heldannic Knights timeline by Bruce Heard.

### 1.3 Sources

Several sources have been used in the present attempt to better detail the Empire of Myoshima.

Some of them are actually needed to use this gazetteer, especially those D&D sourcebooks that present the rules for Player Character of the Hakomon and Shaman class and the Aranea and Rakasta races. Specifically, the GAZ 12 Golden Khan of Ethengar, GAZ F8 Streets of Landfall (for the Fence and Super Thief classes), and the Voyage of the Princess Ark articles listed herebelow are required. PC1 Tall Tales of the Wee Folk has the rules for fairy PCs, so it is needed if Pooka, Drake, or Sidhe characters are desired.

#### 1.3.1 OD&D Sourcebooks

In addition to the required resources, Creature Catalog can be useful for some monsters – though there are no specifically Japanese monsters there, and Champions of Mystara is a replacement for those who have no access to Voyage of the Princess Ark.

GAZ 12 Golden Khan of Ethengar

PC1 Tall Tales of the Wee Folk

Creature Catalog

Champions of Mystara

#### 1.3.2 AD&D Sourcebooks

Legends & Lore has been used to help detailing the Kami-do religion, though none of the gods presented there is directly used. Minor gods from that could easily be used in Myoshima, if necessary. From the Complete Ninja's Handbook, the idea of non-Thief shinobi has been adapted. The book is obviously quite useful if AD&D is used instead of OD&D.

Legends & Lore, 2nd Edition

Complete Ninja's Handbook

#### 1.3.3 Dragon Magazine

Those listed below are just the Dragon Magazine articles by Bruce Heard that are relevant to Myoshima. A number of other articles, mostly for AD&D, are relevant to Oriental Adventures and can be more or less easily adapted.

Voyage of the Princess Ark 7, DM160

Voyage of the Princess Ark 28, DM181

Voyage of the Princess Ark 30, DM183

Rakasta of Mystara, DM247

#### 1.3.4 OD&D Fan Resources

In addition to the resources listed here, a number of articles from the Vaults of Pandius has been used. These are referred to in the text. The Italian resources have been used mostly for (handy) reference, though the Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie (Manual of Weapons and Masteries) has all the Weapon Mastery charts for oriental weapons, and is therefore recommended.

GAZ F8 Streets of Landfall

Marco Dalmonte and Matteo Barnabe', Tomo della Magia di Mystara

Marco Dalmonte, Manuale delle Abilita' Generali, v 6.0

Marco Dalmonte, Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie, v 3.0

Marco Dalmonte, Manuale delle Arti Marziali, v 1.2

#### 1.3.5 Oriental Adventures Line

The AD&D Oriental Adventures line includes a lot of useful material for a campaign drawing on Japan, and several modules are set in Kozakura and Wa, the two pseudo-Japanese nations of Kara-Tur. Neither nation is especially similar to Myoshima – Wa is a military dictatorship, much harsher than Myoshima, while Kozakura is based on Sengoku Japan, and therefore is more chaotic than Myoshima. In both case, the Emperor is just a puppet ruler, which is not the case in Myoshima. Yet, Kozakura is very similar to what Myoshima would have been in the VII and VIII centuries AC, and Myoshima could have evolved into

something like Wa, if the Ashai faction had won the last civil war.

Oriental Adventures

Kara-Tur Campaign Setting

Monstrous Compendium: Kara-Tur Appendix

OA1 Swords of the Daimyo

OA2 Night of the Seven Swords

OA3 Ochimo, The Spirit Warrior

OA4 Blood of the Yakuza

FROA1 Ninja Wars

### 1.3.6 Literature and Anime

As mentioned above, Japanese anime were used for inspiration on several topics. Specifically, *Inuyasha* for youkai and life in (a fantasy version of) the Sengoku age; *Naruto* for everything shinobi (especially the three specializations and the village organization); *Rurouni Kenshin: Tsuiokuhen* for late Tokugawa Japan; and *Tenku no Escaplowne*, which has little oriental, but is set on a hidden world, with the Earth seen as a moon and several races that are quite similar to Rakasta and Lupins!

Another source is found in Japanese literature. Oriental Adventures itself was likely influenced by Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese ghost stories (*Kwaidan*) – mostly translations and adaptations of old Japanese tales. Hearn's works are not anymore protected by copyright, and can be downloaded from Project Gutenberg.<sup>1</sup> Some more Japanese fairy tales were translated by Yei Theodora Ozaki, and can be found as well at Project Gutenberg site.

A classic collection of short stories by Akutagawa Ryunosuke, *Rashomon*, was also used as a source.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.gutenberg.org>

## Chapter 2

# History of Myoshima

### 2.1 Timeline of Patera

The timeline presented herebelow extends and revises the existing timeline of Patera, with a focus on events in Myoshima.

#### 2.1.1 Prehistory

**5000 BC** There is no true civilisation on Patera. Primitive Pachydermion hunter-gatherer tribes live in the main continent of Patera, in the area now known as Rajahstan.

**4300 BC** The Pachydermions have begun adopt a more sedentary lifestyle, forming small village communities. They have also begun to domesticate native plants, notably rice.

**3800 BC** The Pachydermions have become accomplished stonemasons, and begin to construct large edifices in the mountain valleys of their new environment.

**3700 BC** The Pachydermions develop a system of writing, and start keeping written records of the history of their race. The Pachydermion shaman Ganetra is the main force beyond these developments.

**3500 BC** Ganetra attains Immortality in the Sphere of Thought after spending a century penning the book that will become famous as the Tome of Ssu-Ma, after the name he uses when he manifests

on Mystara. He is still revered as Ganetra by the Pachydermions, who know the book as the Tome of Universal Harmony.

**3450 BC** The young chief Dvipendra, Ganetra's successor, leads the most devoted Pachydermions followers of Ganetra to a secluded valley, which they name Kompore-Thap, and founds there a kingdom.

**3400 BC** Ganetra, who has become known to the Skotharian Sherkasta sages under the name of Ssu-ma, brings knowledge of writing among the Sherkasta. The Sherkasta sages, thanks to Ssu-ma's teachings, become aware of the existence of the Pachydermions of Kompore-Thap, and obtain the magical means needed to establish communications with them. They reveal these secrets to northern Sherkasta tribes, telling them that the Pachydermions are Ssu-ma's heralds.

**3200 BC** Following Ssu-ma's visions, Skotharian Sherkasta and Pachydermions from Kompore-Thap build a magical gate, the Svargadvara, that links Mystara to Patera. Contacts between the two races become more common, and the Sherkasta culture of the northern tribes evolves into the Tagh culture.

**3200 BC** The capital city of Pakan is founded in the realm of Kompore-Thap on the site of Dvipendra's first settlement.



**3100 BC** The first great monastery dedicated to Ganetra is built in the mountains of Kompur-Thap.

### 2.1.2 The Great Rain of Fire

**3000 BC** The Great Rain of Fire obliterates the Blackmoorian civilisation and shifts the planetary axis wreaking havoc and destruction all around the world. In Skothar, the Sherkasta sages gather their people (some Tagh, but also many southern Sherkasta, who are more directly threatened by the Great Rain of Fire) and use the Svargadvara to transport them to the safety of Patera, where the Sherkasta settles in the jungles south of Kompur-Thap. Kata Ng, the White Sherkasta, a Tagh healer and sage, reaches Immortality after four lifetimes of fighting to save the Rakasta from extinction in the upcoming disaster. The Svargadvara, though, is destroyed by the magical energies of the Blackmoorian disaster.

**2900 BC** On Patera, the pacific leadership of the wise Sherkasta followers of Ssu-ma is questioned by the more warlike factions of the younger Sherkasta who do not remember the Great Rain of Fire. After a while the wilder Sherkasta rebel to their Tagh leaders and to the pacific lifestyle preached by the followers of Ssu-ma (both Sherkasta and Pachydermions). The friction between the two groups causes two migrations: Sherkasta migrate to nearby island groups founding cultures inspired to that of their ancestors – the Harimau-Belang who survive in Skothar – and found in the following decades the nations of Surabayang and Malacayog, while many Pachydermions retreat to the mountains of Kompur-Thap. The more peaceful Sherkasta remain in the area now occupied by Rajahstan, serving as a buffer between the two opposed cultures.

**2400 BC** With the prompting of Ganetra, Rakasta and Pachydermions on the Far Side continent begin to trade and share ideas with one another. The Sherkasta tribes begin adopting many of the ways of their Pachydermion neighbours.

### 2.1.3 Rise of Great Houses

**1700 BC** The massive invasion of hordes of goblinoids destroys the Plaktur civilisation and forces the Rakasta to escape southwards. Some groups of powerful sorcerers and nobles instead use a collective spell in order to escape en mass and they are transported on Myoshima, where they lay the basis for the foundation of a Rakasta empire.

The Lammasu, Faerie, and Elven bloodlines are brought to Myoshima by the three most powerful Houses of Plaktur, the Youseihito, Sennyo and Hanejishi.

**1500 BC** The Rakasta adventurer Ninfangle reaches Immortality in the Sphere of Thought after travelling across all Rakasta nations. He brings to Myoshima a number of his descendants, who carry the Sphinx bloodline, whose trademark is the combination of knowledge and power. They form the fourth Great House, Nueteki.

**800 BC** House Kurohyou and House Urumi, both emerging powers in Myoshima, begin their centuries-spanning feud.

**600 BC** Danel Tigerstripes is given command of the Rakhasa by Atzanteotl. He sends the evil spirits to corrupt Sind. Weakened by the desertification, the Rakasta civilization of Sind dies out slowly in the following centuries.

**500 BC** At the fall of the Milenian Empire, outcast Simbasta mercenaries migrate to Patera following a priest of Ninfangle. They bring the Dragonne and Manticore bloodline with them, creating the Great Houses of Ryuuko and Shishikugi, which quickly become rivals.

**400 BC** Capital city of Mara founded in Myoshima. Hereditary aristocracy is established as a form of central government. A military dictator, the Shogun, is elected in wartime to lead the armies of Myoshima. In peacetime, the Shujin (clan masters) defined the policies for their own lands, and took

nation-wide decision by majority. At this time, the main division between the clans is based on their ethnic origin – dividing the Plaktur clans from the older, Skotharian clans.

**350 BC** The noble clans begin hiring more and more warriors on a temporary basis to bolster their own forces as they try to wrestle lands and power from their opponents. The ancestor of the samurai social class is formed.

**300 BC** The feud between House Kuroyhou and Urumi culminates in a silent war, as the two clans develop the Ebon Tiger and Displacer Beast Bloodline, and use them to increase the effectiveness of their house assassins, thus becoming known as the Ninja Houses. The powerful abilities of the assassins of these Houses allow the clans to quickly secure a strong position among the great aristocratic families, but their rivalry allow the older clans to play them one against the other. From this time on, Urumi and Kurohyou are counted as the seventh and eight Great House (which is which is hotly debated, of course, with both Houses claiming to be the seventh Great House).

**200 BC** The survivors of the Sindhi Rakasta move to Patera in a bid to survive the demographic pressure of the humans and shapeshifters of Sind. The Rakshasa, busy infiltrating the human society, mostly leave them to their own devices. Their bloodline, however, is brought to Myoshima by Rakasta belonging the last of the Great Houses, the House of Kakureshi.

#### 2.1.4 The Kamakura Shogunate

**0 AC** The non-blooded clans, concerned that the bloodline powers of the Ninja Houses and other blooded clans will come to threaten their position of power, begin banding together to take control of the Shujin council.

**38 AC** The House of Kamakura, one of the non-blooded clans, gains the upper hand in the aris-

tocratic council in Mara. The leader of the Kamakura clan is named Shogun, under the pretense of fighting incursions of Surabayang pirates in southern Myoshima.

**42 AC** Shogun Kamakura manipulates the council to obtain that one tenth of the assets of each clan be tithed to the Shujin council itself, and then to allocate those funds to the formation of a professional army under his own command. The Kamakura Shogunate, the first military government of Myoshima is established.

**67 AC** Shogun Kamakura dies of old age, and is replaced by his son.

**83 AC** At the death of the second Shogun, the Great Houses rebel, destroying the House of Kamakura. The clan leaders cannot agree on a new central government, and begin gathering support from the lesser houses.

#### 2.1.5 Three Hundred Years War

**120 AC** By this time, most of the Myoshiman aristocracy is gathered around the Great Houses – almost all lesser houses are vassals to one of the Great Houses. The leaders of the Great Houses take the title of Okimi (king). Civil war breaks out in Myoshima, starting off a century of internal warfare. The blooded houses rally their followers and plunge into the war, striving to achieve dominance over the entire land of Myoshima.

**136 AC** Malacayog raiders stage a major invasion of the southern reaches of Myoshima. House Shishikugi takes the brunt of the attack, losing many of its allies.

**143 AC** A second Malacayog raid forces the Houses of Shishikugi, Urumi and Kakureshi to form a coalition, which lasts for some 20 years. Shishikugi Takeshi named Shogun of southern Myoshima. The Minami no Shogun routs the Malacayog forces in a

series of battles, and repels an attack from the House of Ryuuko.

**145 AC** After a failed counter-raid in Malacayog, Shishikugi Takeshi resigns. The southern alliance remains active, though mostly with defensive functions.

**200 AC** After a number of highly-pitched magical battles, the House of Sennyo is defeated by magicians from Kakureishi and Yoseihito. House Sennyo retreats to a small, highly defensible island, refusing further contact with the outside world for more than two centuries.

**300 AC** The House of Kakureshi is almost annihilated by a combined attack of Hanejishi, Kuroyou and Nueteki.

**350 AC** The Houses of Urumi and Kuroyou, on the verge of destruction, go underground. The members carrying the weakest traces of the bloodlines sacrifice themselves to provide cover for the strongest members – the Urumi clan launches a suicidal attack on the Kuroyou stronghold. After the battle, troops from House Ryuuko fall on the few survivors and massacre them, leading most to believe both Ninja Houses extinct. Former mercenary samurai of the fallen Great Houses claim territories and status as a new social class, the Daimyo.

### 2.1.6 Rise of the Myoshiman Empire

**400 AC** Daimyo Hirameki begins the process of reuniting the warring clans of Myoshima. Clan Kitahara breaks off from the House of Yoseihito, speeding up its fall. In the following years, many non-blooded clans, tired of their overlords, break off from the Great Houses, some trying to reach more power or independence on their own, but more choosing to ally with the rising star of clan Kitahara. Among the early allies of Hirameki are the houses of Kojima, Katayama and Do.

**410 AC** Most adult male members of House Nueteki die in a series of bloody battles against

Ryuuko, Shishikugi and Hanejishi. Female clan leaders swear allegiance to Kitahara Hirameki – though some fail to accept the decision and leave Myoshima by sea, landing in what now is Selimpore.

**415 AC** The leaders of House Hanejishi commune with their patron Immortals, Ka and Ixion. They receive the order to ally with Daimyo Hirameki.

**420 AC** By this time, Houses Nueteki, Yoseihito and Hanejishi have fallen under the sway of Kitahara Hirameki.

**425 AC** Minrothad merchants bring lycanthropy to Sind. Taking advantage of the situation, numerous shapeshifters already present in Sindhi society, including Rakshasa-evil, rakasta-like spirits- begin to subvert control of the land to their own ends.

**430 AC** The last two warring Great Houses, Ryuuko and Shishikugi, capitulate, as they cannot agree to ally against Hirameki's forces.

**435 AC** Hirameki has united the warring factions of Myoshima. He is proclaimed the first Emperor of Myoshima. He sends envoys to House Sennyo, which acknowledges the new Emperor's authority. Most of the Great Houses are much reduced in power, though all of them survive in some capacity. Hirameki promotes several lesser houses that have supported him to greater power, including the Kojima, Do, Tomitsu, Miyashika, Sanada, Kaito, and Tokanawa. The leaders of these houses receive the title of Daimyo formally, as well as the task of ruling entire provinces.

**450 AC** Sindhi rise up against their oppressors. Fleeing persecution, many Rakshasa flee to Patera, where they land in the realm now known as Rajahstan. They bring stronger elements of Sindhi culture to Patera. Rise of the "Sindised" Kingdoms in Rajahstan.

**452 AC** Birth of Kakureshi Kuromaru.

**460 AC** Kitahara Hirameki abdicates the throne to pursue Immortality. Since he has only daughters, he names his cousin Kitahara Ieyasu as successor.

**464 AC** Emperor Ieyasu completes the division of the empire in provinces, assigning the newly formed provinces to House Tomitsu and Kanakada, whose leaders are related to his mother's family.

**470 AC** The House of Kakureshi is fully restored with the help of Rajahstani Rakasta carrying a strong Rakshasa bloodline.

**487 AC** Birth of Nekotakai Myojo, from a family descended from one of Hirameki's daughters.

**490 AC** A 4 class system is instituted in Myoshima by the newly ascended third Emperor Myotori, thanks to the manipulations of the House of Kakureshi. Kakureshi Kuromaru becomes the Shikken (prime minister).

### 2.1.7 Time of Retreat

Between 490 and 900 AC, the Empire's frontiers remain closed. While this policy hampers the growth of trade, it allows the daimyo to consolidate their hold on the provinces. During this time, three prominent members of the Imperial Family reach Immortality, and become patrons of the Myoshiman Empire. The Eternal General also becomes Immortal during this time.

**491 AC** The Emperor, influenced by the Shikken, institutes period of total isolation from the rest of Patera.

**500 AC** The Ninja Houses re-emerge after 150 years of hiding, offering the services of their spies and assassins on an almost open basis. By this time, the matriarcal nation of Selimpore is also formed by Domestic Rakasta from Rajahstan, Myoshima and Surabayang. Selimpore is ruled by a dissident branch of House Nueteki, and quickly becomes a trade hub among the Pateran nations.

**508 AC** As the aging emperor weakens, a hero, Nekotakai Myojo, appears to save prince Iruka from the machination of the evil Shikken, whose father is revealed to be the evil Rakshasa Dvapinakumara. Clan Kakureshi is disgraced, Kakureshi Kuromaru is neutered<sup>1</sup>. Myojo's sister marries prince Iruka's son Naoki.

**512 AC** Kakureshi Kuromaru disappears. His family covers up the disappearance, claiming the old statesman to be dead.

**527 AC** Shotohai Uprising. Several different groups of impoverished ronin – descendents of samurai who fought in the Three Hundred Year wars and were not awarded lands – rebel against the imperial rule this year. The Shotohai are the most successful of these, threatening to overcome the defences of House Tokanawa and Ryuuko.

**528 AC** Nekotakai Myojo and Kitahara Jiro (son of the fifth emperor, Kitahara Naoki) lead the imperial army to quell the Shotohai Uprising.

**533 AC** Kakureshi Kuromaru becomes a lich.

**540 AC** Nekotakai Myojo, Kitahara Jiro, and five other Kitahara princelings travel to the surface of Matera. Prince Jiro dies, but is reincarnated elsewhere to begin his Path of the Polymath.

**541 AC** Nekotakai Myojo reaches Immortality in the Sphere of Thought.

**558 AC** Princess Kitahara Myomasa writes a series of poems on the journey of her brothers to Matera and the "death" of Prince Jiro.

**594 AC** Kakureshi Kuromaru creates the Noroimusha (cursed warriors) from the spirits of dead warriors and the the Shiryoumusha (dead warriors)

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<sup>1</sup>According to Bruce's article, typical Rakasta punishments include neutering, declawing, and tail amputation!

from the bones of the warriors of the Three Hundred Years war. He sends a massive undead army to conquer Myoshima, but is slowed down by a suicidal charge of 200 samurai and retainers of House Shishikugi and then stopped by an army of Sohei from the southern temples of Shima, led by Abbot Shingen, of the Katayama family (actually the fourth and final reincarnation of the Polymath Guthbrand). The two battles allow the Imperial army led by crown prince Myomura to reach the field in time to save most of the southern fiefs, though House Sanada and Kaito are destroyed by the undead army. Kuromaru's army is finally defeated by the combined forces of prince Myomura, Abbot Shingen, and daimyo Shishikugi Unari in the Battle of Inada. The three recover an ancient helm from the Shikken's lair – it is the Armet of Wayland, the artifact that old Shingen had been looking for for years.

**595 AC** Thankful to Abbot Shingen, the Emperor raises the Katayama clan to the upper ranks of aristocracy, giving them the daimyo title and provincial domain that was of House Sanada. House Taikoku, a clan of retainers of House Shishikugi, is awarded the lands of House Kaito. The undead attack prompts further reforms: quicker reactions are required by provincial forces, so the daimyo start establishing new castles or restoring fortresses of the Three Hundred Years war, appointing senior samurai or family members to rule them.

**598 AC** The Gate of Shingen, a 100' tall structure commemorating the Battle of Inada and the achievements of Shingen, is built within the Katayama estate. Abbot Shingen retreats to meditate on the meaning of Shima's teachings (actually, he has recovered the memories of his former lives, and adventures alone for the next twenty years).

**600 AC** Kitahara Hirameki attains Immortality in the Sphere of Energy.

**610 AC** By this time, the power of the daimyos is firmly entrenched. Each daiymo in turn gives to his more loyal followers and relatives control over smaller

parcels of land, and the title of *shugo*. Each shugo controls a number of *jito*, samurai stewards of minor domain (usually a single village). The feudal age of Myoshima reaches its climax.

**620 AC** Guthbrand, the Eternal General, reaches Immortality in the Sphere of Matter after being reincarnated as the Myoshiman war priest Shingen.

**624 AC** Elsewhere on Mystara, Kitahara Jiro attains Immortality in the Sphere of Matter.

**650 AC** The noble houses usurp much of the power as a young, weak willed descendant of Hirameki sits on the Imperial throne. The two following centuries are a troubled time, with powerful daimyo fighting openly for control of the land and the imperial throne, weak or underage Emperors manipulated by their regents or ministers, and monsters and evil spirits prowl in the impoverished countryside.

**740 AC** Empress Myoko, one of the few female Rakasta to ever rule the empire, is crowned in Mara. In her 30 years long reign, she is not able to retake control of the vassals, but she holds firmly the Imperial Domain and promotes the cultural growth of Mara, sponsoring kabuki and bunraku troupes, wizards and sages. Several chief religious texts from Kompur-Thap and epic poems from Rajahstan are translated into the Myoshiman poetic language.

**850 AC** A renovation movement (*Shinsei*) begins, supported by several lesser clans and some of the Great Houses, especially Nueteki and Hanejishi. These houses campaign for the restoration of imperial power and a change in foreign policy.

### 2.1.8 The Modern Age

During the last century, Myoshima opens its borders to foreign traders, including Rakasta from Bellayne, but attempts also to invade the neighbouring countries, resulting in increased tension between the major power blocks of Myoshima. Moreover, discovery

of Myoshima by the Heldannic Knights and the Alphatian Empire prompts the formation of plans to conquer Mystara.

**900 AC** A stronger Kitahara clan member, Myotomo, takes the throne. The new Myoshiman Emperor ends the period of isolation and institutes a new campaign of expansionism.

**903 AC** The Myoshimans lay claim to the nation of Selimpore and send an expedition corps there. Coastal Rajahstani city-states ally with the Matriarchy. The allied fleets intercept the Myoshimans on the high seas, sinking many Myoshiman ships. Meanwhile, Myoshiman air cavalry is hampered by bad weather conjured by Selimporese wizards, which keeps them out of the battle.

First contacts between Myoshima and Bellayne. The Myoshiman Empire attempts a colonization of Malacayog, but the fierce headhunting Sherkasta that inhabit the land repel them.

**920 AC** Bellaynish Rakasta first reach Patera, and open a trading outpost in Selimpore.

**921 AC** In order to further break the power of the noble houses, Emperor Myotori orders the construction of a new capitol, taking a large parcel of land from the holdings of House Taikoku. The construction is to be supervised by a Rajahstani geomancy expert, Swami Chandraputra, who selects personally the construction site, the orientation of the city, and the disposition of the main buildings.

**925 AC** Responding to increasing aggression from surrounding nations, the various city-states of Rajahstan agree to an alliance proposed by the priests of Ganetra. Together, they form the Spiritual Council.

**942 AC** The new capitol, Heiankyo, is completed, and the court moves there with a large number of supporting staff, merchants, servants, and craftsmen.

**943 AC** The crown prince, Masatori, is murdered. The shinkan are unable to revive him, and magical investigation reveals that the prince's soul has been consumed by entropic entities while trapped in the spirit world. No clues are found about the murderer's identity, except that it is shielded by extremely powerful magics. At the behest of aging Emperor Myotomo, magic users of House Sennyo and Youseihito are summoned to investigate further. After weeks of magical and mundane investigation, it is discovered that the city itself is shaped as a powerful focus for dark, arcane magic. Swami Chandraputra is summoned to explain, but he seems to have disappeared entirely – in truth, there was no Swami Chandraputra at all – he was impersonated by a Rakshasa pawn of the undead Shikken.

**944 AC** On the first anniversary of Prince Masatori's death, his ghost<sup>2</sup> appears in Heiankyo, killing the Emperor's minister of magic. Priests of both the Kami-do and Shima-do fail to exorcise the rampaging ghost, but contain it within the borders of the imperial palace. The court is forced to relocate to the old capitol, Mara. Heiankyo is renamed Byakkyo – the White City, white being the colour of death and mourning in Myoshima.

**952 AC** Emperor Myotomo, weakened by the death of his eldest son and the loss of his life's work, dies. His grandson, Myotaro ascends to the throne. Daiymo Ashai Kamaggi named Sessho (Regent) for the young Emperor.

**956 AC** Myoshiman forces intercept an unknown flying vessel, a Neh-Thalggu skyship, and assault it. The Brain Collector vessel, heavily damaged in the attack, crashland on Mystara. In light of a possible alien invasion, Ashai Kamaggi assumes the role of Shogun right before the Emperor comes into age.

**961 AC** Heldannic Knights, exploring beyond the Mystaran Skyshield, encounter the invisible moon of Patera. Landing on Near Side, they encounter the

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<sup>2</sup>Actually, an Evil Spirit who has absorbed Prince Masatori's memories

Myoshimans. Both races, aggressive and xenophobic, react badly, and war is declared between the two nations.

Shogun Kamaggi is confirmed in his position to lead the war against the Heldannic Knights.

**995 AC** Ashai rebellion. The ultra-conservative Ashai clan tries to force the emperor to reinstate the isolationist policies, but is defeated by the combined forces of the Katayama, Kojima and Do families. Shogun Ashai Kamaggi, the head of the main branch of the family, flees his province with a large number of followers.

Daimyo Katayama named Shogun in place of Ashai Kamaggi, to complete the pacification of the rebel provinces.

**964 AC** Prince Haldemar of Haaken arrives in Myoshima, and establishes the first formal contact between the empires of Myoshima and Alphatia.

## 2.2 The Bloodlines and the Nine Great Houses

Bloodlines (*keisai*) define ancient noble clans in Myoshima. Each bloodline is carried by a single large noble clan (the Nine Great Houses), whose members usually exhibit at least a faint trace of the bloodline.

Major members usually have weak bloodlines, while great bloodlines are limited to a very small number of Rakasta in the empire<sup>3</sup>.

### 2.2.1 House Youseihito

One of the noble houses of Plaktur, the Youseihito has an ancient bloodline obtained from the Immortal Ordana. The ancestors of the Youseihito clan helped the elves that left Ilsundal's migration and settled along the Savage Coast, and the elves' patron, Ordana, gave them some of the powers of the elven blood.

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<sup>3</sup>Bloodline are described in Bruce Heard's Rakasta article on Dragon Magazine; the Dragonne, Elven and Sphinx bloodlines are taken from that source

Youseihito clanmembers have a high affinity for enchantments and charms, and the clan has the largest reserves of magical items, as well as a great political power. On the down side, Youseihito mages are often mistrusted even by their own clan relatives, due to their reputation as mindbenders.

### History

During the Three Hundred Years war, House Youseihito was careful in its moves, using charmed pawns and magical items to maximize its advantage on the military and political battlefield.

Never a numerous clan, it was however able to come up on top until Kitahara Hirameki took a large part of the lesser houses formerly aligned with Youseihito and formed his own power block. The clan was never able to recover, has several of its more powerful enemies, including as the House of Ryuuko, took advantage of the limited manpower left to Youseihito to defeat them. Within a few years, the clan was forced to swear allegiance to the now powerful daimyo Hirameki – something which the proud heirs of Plaktur have not yet fully accepted.

During the Time of Retreat, Youseihito plotted along with Kakureshi to bring the downfall of the House of Kitahara, only to find their plan thwarted by the opposition of the Nueteki and Hanejishi clans.

### The House today

The clan is currently on bad terms with its traditional rivals, Ryuuko, and with Nueteki and Hanejishi. It is neutral towards Shishikugi and Kakureshi, and is on working terms with both Ninja Houses. Youseihito and Sennyō tend to ignore each other, and House Youseihito generally deals with "lesser" houses only as a provider of magic – charging extremely high prices.

### 2.2.2 House Sennyō

The second of the noble clans of Plaktur, House Sennyō is known for the skill of its member in summoning magics. Sennyō Rakasta carry the bloodline of the

Table 2.1: Bloodlines and Great Houses

Bloodline	House	Typical NPC	Origin
Elven	Youseihito	Enchanters	Plaktur
Faerie	Sennyo	Conjurers	Plaktur
Lammasu	Hanejishi	Clerics	Plaktur
Sphinx	Nueteki	Loremasters/Fighters	Ochalea
Dragonne	Ryuuko	Fighters	Simbasta
Manticore	Shishikugi	Fighters	Simbasta
Ebon Tiger	Kurohyou	Thieves/Assassins	Myoshima
Displacer Beast	Urumi	Thieves/Assassins	Myoshima
Rakshasa	Kakureshi	Illusionists	Rajahstan

Greatwood Faeries, which gives them a greater ability to control magical energies. During long centuries of study, the Sennyo have struck a large number of deals with otherworldly creatures, which they can call upon to help in times of crisis.

### History

During the Three Hundred Years war, House Sennyo wizards made extensive use of summoned creatures, but were overcome by a coalition of Kakureshi and Youseihito. Even the combined power of these two magically powerful houses was not sufficient to completely destroy the Sennyo, who simply retreated to their island fortress, abandoning their followers and vassal clans.

At the end of the war, the House of Sennyo peacefully joined the newly formed Empire of Myoshima. Having retreated early from the war, Sennyo had more resources than most other Great Houses, allowing it to rise quickly to prominence during the Time of Retreat.

### The House today

Nowadays, Sennyo clanmembers include a high percentage of magic users, who often end up working for the provincial governors or the imperial government.

They are not very popular with the lesser houses, since they abandoned their vassals during the war, and are generally neutral towards all other Great Houses, except Kakureshi, which it opposes strongly.

### 2.2.3 House Hanejishi

Having obtained the powerful Lammasu bloodline thanks to their contact with the ancient civilizations of the Arm of the Immortal, the ancestors of the Hanejishi clan formed the third and the noblest of the noble houses of Plaktur. They are known for the ancient religious traditions, dealing mostly with the worship of the sun (Ixion) and the earth (Ka), and include a large number of clerics in their ranks.

### History

During the Three Hundred Years war, Hanejishi fought especially against the Rakshasa-blooded Kakureshi, joining Nueteki and Kurohyou to defeat them.

The House of Hanejishi would have maintained the alliance, but Kurohyou was severely weakened from the military point of view, and was forced to go underground when the desperate Urumi clan staged a massive attack against their main fortress, while Nueteki, under the leadership of aggressive warriors, turned against its former allies in a bid for power.

Using its considerable resources and clerical power, and exploiting the reckless moves of Nueteki, Hanejishi was able to survive the war, and was one of the first Houses to join daimyo Hirameki, lending considerable credence to the legend of Hirameki's mother divine nature.



## The House today

In modern times, Hanejishi is a staunch supporter of the Empire and especially of House Kitahara, and a bitter enemy of House Kakureshi.

Hanejishi leaders bear no enmity towards the Nueteki, and routinely employ Kurohyou ninja for spying missions. They are generally neutral towards other Great Houses, and friendly towards those lesser houses that were part of the Imperial restoration movement.

### 2.2.4 House Nueteki

The descendants of the Immortal Ninfangle (Nin Fengli, or Nueteki Fuuri in Myoshiman) carry a powerful bloodline, that of the Sphynx.

The males of the line are fierce warriors, the paragon of the Samurai, endowed with the powerful roar of the greater Rakasta, while the females are wise and endowed with profound knowledge. Many Nueteki females are wizards (usually generalists), clerics of Ninfangle or bards, while most males are Samurai, or Sohei defenders of the temples of their divine ancestor.

## History

During the Three Hundred Years war, the Nueteki male leaders battled against the houses of Kakureshi, Ryuuko, Shishikugi and Hanejishi.

Pitted against such powerful opponents, few of the Nueteki males survived. By the time when daimyo Hirameki was emerging as the strongest power in Myoshima, the females had taken over the clan leadership.

The majority of the elders sided for submitting to Kitahara clan in exchange for protection, but a sizable minority chose to flee Myoshima, establishing a new home on the southern coast of Rajahstan. During the Time of Retreat, this settlement evolved into a major merchant city-state, ruled by matriarchs of Nueteki blood.

## The House today

The Nueteki clan recently tried to bring the Selimporese “rebels” under Myoshiman control, but failed miserably. Currently, the Matriarch of Selimpore has arranged an alliance with the Kingdom of Bellayne and the Spiritual Council of Rajahstan to ensure its protection, foiling any further plan of expansion of House Nueteki.

The Nueteki are generally friendly towards the pro-Imperial Houses, though periodically the clan warriors get the upper hand and steer the clan policies towards aggression.

### 2.2.5 House Ryuuko

Descendants of Simbasta outcasts (due to their bloodline as well as their rebellious character) employed by the last Emperors of Milenia to control the rebellious eastern barbarians, the Ryuuko draw their strength from their blood connection with the dragons, thanks to their Dragonne bloodline. They are the most savage of Myoshiman warriors, and are always ready to rebel against the central authority. Nevertheless, the Emperors find it too hard to uproot this warrior clan, and are forced to keep the clan leader appeased with titles and honours.

## History

During the Three Hundred Years war, House Ryuuko fought hard against almost all other houses, and especially against their traditional rivals of House Shishikugi, with whom they share similar background and motivations.

They were able to preserve their provincial governorship through sheer strength – it would have costed Hirameki too much to defeat them and Shishikugi on the battlefield, but the two rival houses could not ally against the would-be emperor.

Shishikugi swore allegiance to Hirameki first, hoping that the emperor would then crush House Ryuuko, but Hirameki chose to allow Ryuuko to submit as well, recognizing the value of the Dragonne-blooded warriors to Myoshima.

### **The House today**

Nowadays, House Ryuuko is still a bitter rival of Shishikugi, and is generally anti-imperial. Blooded Ryuuko are rarely in a position of power, and when this happens, they do not last long. They serve mostly as elite warriors in the large clan army.

### **2.2.6 House Shishikugi**

This house carried the powerful but primitive Manticore bloodline from the deserts of Davania. Formed by the descendants of Simbasta outcasts (typically cowards who had had their tails cut) who had given up their souls to Entropic Immortals in exchange for the power of the Manticore, House Shishikugi begun as little more than a mercenary band in the service of the rulers of Cyclonia.

At the fall of the Milenian Empire, they found themselves out of work, until they were called to Myoshima by a power-hungry lord who hoped to use the Manticore warriors as shock troops in a military campaign he was planning. The treacherous mercenaries, however, turned on him and took his lands, forming a noble house in the following centuries.

### **History**

During the Three Hundred Years war, House Shishikugi fought mostly against House Ryuuko, which shares the same Simbasta origins, but consider Shishikugi a disgraced clan, and Nueteki. Just like House Ryuuko, the clan of the Manticore was able to maintain its control over a province – possibly through the help of their Entropic patrons, according to the clan's enemies.

### **The House today**

In modern times, Shishikugi Rakasta are aggressive and expansionistic, ready to support expeditions against foreign nations – though less so in the case of offworld nations, since the clan has a remarkable lack of magicians, and therefore limited access to the magic needed to carry warriors in the airless void.

Moreover, Shishikugi are bullies – faced with enemies clearly stronger, they often flee, possibly leaving their allies in a tight spot.

### **2.2.7 House Kurohyou**

One of the two Ninja Houses, Kuroyhou started from humble origins and raised to great power through ruthless use of powerful magics, only to fall back into the shadows – where they currently thrive.

### **History**

Kurohyou clan began its history as a minor clan in Plaktur. When the fall of Plaktur came, clan Kurohyou followed the Plaktur noble houses in exile, settling in a small patch of land in Myoshima that was already inhabited by earlier settlers from Skothar. The most prominent of these families was the Urumi clan. Both clans claimed the entire area, and built fortresses, waging an endless war. The war used to be contained to minor, if frequently occurring, border skirmishes between the most hotheaded members of the two clans, but each passing year seemed to add more fuel to the feud, as each dead Rakasta was avenged bloodily by his relatives.

Neither of the two warring clans was large enough to prevail, nor had the resources to hire large numbers of samurai, like the more powerful Great Houses, so both clans turned to infiltration and silent murder to minimize their own losses. When even their assassin training could not lead to victory, the leader of House Urumi turned to his magical advisors, asking them to enhance the house ninja. News of the researches of the Urumi wizards promptly reached the ears of Kurohyou spies, who related them to the clan chief.

So, Kurohyou too turned to magic to counter Urumi, and the clan magic-users chose to magically imbue the abilities of the dreaded Ebon Tiger, an ethereal predator captured by the strongest of them, Kurohyou Masahiro, in the best ninja. Thus was born the Ebon Tiger bloodline, and House Kurohyou ascended among the Great Houses.

During the Three Hundred Years war, House Kurohyou and Urumi nearly annihilated each other, until both decided to abandon their fortress and their land

claims. House Kuroyhou turned into a secretive clan of ninja, their skills available for hire.

### **The House today**

House Kuroyhou is still among the most commonly employed ninja clans, especially by the Great Houses that came from Plaktur, and against the other Great Houses.

### **2.2.8 House Urumi**

One of the two Ninja Houses, Urumi is one of the few native clans to have reached the status of Great House.

#### **History**

The Urumi clan had already a long but unremarkable history, dating back to the times when Kata Ng brought many of the weaker Rakasta tribes to Myoshima to save them from the Great Rain of Fire, when the Plaktur Rakasta fled Mystara and begun settling in the islands of Myoshima.

The Urumi clan lands were occupied in part by a lesser Plaktur house, the Kurohyou, leading to a series of border conflicts that escalated into an all-out assassin war. The Urumi clan wizards used their powers, and the knowledge of a fearsome feline, the displacer beast, to imbue in their best Ninja abilities that would give them an edge against their Kurohyou rivals.

Unfortunately, the Kurohyou clan had several spies planted in the Urumi household, and promptly reacted with similar magics, leading to another standoff between the rival clans. However, both Kurohyou and Urumi were able to ascend among the Great Houses.

During the Three Hundred Years war, the conflict between the rival houses reached a climax, and threatened to destroy both. In a desperate move, the Urumi chief sent the clan armies, minus all the Ninja and other elites, to storm the Kurohyou fortress, while he himself led the clan elite out of their own fortress, abandoning it and the lands it defended.

The surviving Urumi leadership rebuilt the clan as a secretive Ninja organization that is still active in modern Myoshima, rivalling both House Kurohyou and the other ninja clans of the Empire.

### **2.2.9 House Kakureshi**

Nowadays the smallest of the Great Houses, Kakureshi clan does not enjoy great power, nor the favor of the current emperor. However, since they are not trusted by anyone, members of House Kakureshi tend to find positions as minor bureaucrats. Many Kakureshi, ashamed of their house history, choose to become priests or monks of Shima. Others, though, revel in the evil of their ancestors, and choose to exploit their bloodline's affinity for illusionism to become criminals. House Kakureshi also has ties with a few Rakshasa-dominated city-states in Rajahstan.

#### **History**

This clan derives from those Rakasta who fled Sind circa 200 BC. Most of them came from villages that had suffered under the rule of evil tiger spirits, and brought the Rakshasa bloodline to Myoshima. The rise of their clan was unopposed until, during the Three Hundred Years war, the House of Kakureshi managed to defeat House Sennyō, coming to such power that they raised the envy of several powerful enemy, leading to a nearly complete defeat less than a century later.

House Kakureshi only recovered when several Rakshasa, fleeing from Sind after the shapeshifter purges, took control of the clan and installed one of their half-breed sons, Kakureshi Kuromaru, as the clan leader. Restored in numbers, magical power and wealth, the clan achieved great power in the newly-formed imperial court, until the house leader took the title of Shikken (holder of power) under the reign of emperor Myotori. House Kakureshi engineered the Time of Retreat, isolating Myoshima from external influences.

The Shikken hoped to have his clan intermarry with the imperial family, while at the same time he worked to undermine the loyalty of the clans, portraying the imperial rule as ineffective and tyrannical.

In 508, when emperor Myotori was already quite old, the Shikken sent assassins to murder crown prince Iruka, hoping to gain more power by having one of his relatives marry Iruka's sister and become emperor. However, Nekotakai Myojo, an heroic yojimbo of prince Iruka, not only foiled the assassins, but he also traced them down to the Shikken, allowing Iruka to confront his ailing father with proof of House Kakureshi's treason. Kuromaru himself was captured by Nekotakai Myojo, and sentenced to neutering and reclusion in his rooms in the imperial palace.

All males of House Kakureshi had their whiskers cut, and the House was forever marked with shame, and lost the lands and power it had recovered in the fifty years since its restoration. Many of the Kakureshi retreated to monasteries of Shima to beg the Immortal's forgiveness for their clan chief, giving origin to an habit that is still very common among the Kakureshi – at least one son or daughter of each Kakureshi family joins the priesthood or the monks of Shima.

### **Fate of the Shikken**

The deposed, mutilated and imprisoned shikken, however, did not give up his plans for the domination of Myoshima. With the help of a few trusted family members, he undertook the study of magic, then feigned his own death at the age of 60, and fled to the wilderness of southern Myoshima, where the fall of House Urumi and Kakureshi had left the land fragmented into many smaller provinces held by relatively weak daimyos whose primary problem was avoiding the wrath of the powerful and short tempered lord of House Shishikugi. He established a lair there, employing Urumi ninja, ronins, and a few samurai loyal to House Kakureshi to protect it. He spent twenty years studying the arcane arts, especially those that could give him an edge that no other Rakasta in Myoshima would have. Sensing that his time was running out, he delved into the dark arts, finally finding the secret of lichdom in 533 AC.

As a lich, Kuromaru devoted decades to magical research, obtaining powers far beyond those of mortal wizards, and creating many undead servants to

serve as his army. In 594 AC, the former Shikken sent his army of undead – Noroimusha (Skeleton Warriors) and Shiryoumusha (skeletons) to invade the provinces of southern Myoshima. However, the armies of Myoshima prevailed, thanks to the efforts of Abbot Shingen (a.k.a. Guthbrand the Eternal General, who also completed his Polymath Quest during the war, recovering the Armet by Wayland from Kuromaru's lair). The former Shikken fled to northern Myoshima, where he spent more time in research, creating the Yoroimusha (Doom guards) and the Kagemusha (Shade). He did not, however, stage a new attempt at taking the throne by military means. Rather, he used his knowledge and magical powers, as well as those of his Kagemusha servants to infiltrate the courts of the northern daimyos, trying to subvert their power and use them against the empire. House Sennyō, despite its considerable magical powers, has been the first major house to be completely infiltrated by Kuromaru, and the Shikken has considerable control over the House of Tokanawa as well. The Shikken is now steadily working on his Path of the Conqueror combined Testimony & Task (conquering Myoshima), after completing his Quest (a gigantic undead war machine he used in the first three battles of his war).

## Chapter 3

# Player Characters

Table 3.1: Sasquatch level progression

Level	Sasquatch	
Cub	2d8	-60.000
Whelp	3d8	-30.000
Young	4d8	-15.000
NM	5d8	0
1	6d8	60.000
2	7d8	120.000
3	—	240.000
4	8d8	480.000
5	9d8	780.000
6	10d8	1.080.000
7	—	1.380.000
8	11d8	1.680.000
9+	+2 HP	+300.000

The Player Characters of a Myoshiman campaign are quite different from those of a typical Mystaran campaign. The absence of humans, and the peculiar nature of the Myoshiman cultures, make a native group almost alien.

### 3.1 Character Races

Most character races in Myoshima fall in the near-human group, with Rakasta being the most common. Rakasta fill the role of humans in a typical adventuring party. Aranea, Fairies, Pachydermions, Sasquatch, and Tengu are the other common options, replacing the traditional demihumans.

#### 3.1.1 Rakasta

Rakasta are the most common race on Patera, and the dominant race in Myoshima. Three main breeds are native of Myoshima: the Alley Rakasta, the Domestic Rakasta, and the Mountain Rakasta<sup>1</sup>. Most Alley and Domestic Rakasta in Myoshima lean towards a SHERKASTA ancestry – with striped fur and round faces, while those from Selimpore and Rajahstan have more variety, including pale furs with darker spots on limbs and face, and dark furs with no markings. Some Mystaran Rakasta from Bellayne (Domestic or Alley) can also be found in Myoshima and Selimpore.

Mountain Rakasta are known as *Yamabito* (mountain barbarians) in Myoshima, and are the most common ethnic group after Myoshimans. They are generally considered barbaric by the more civilized Domestic Rakasta.

Sherkasta<sup>2</sup> and Cloud Pardasta<sup>3</sup> are present in most regions of Patera except Myoshima. SHERKASTA are especially common in Surabayang and Malacayog.

#### 3.1.2 Pachydermions

Pachydermions are the second more common race in Myoshima. These ponderous, elephant-headed humanoid live mostly in their own kingdom, Kompor-

<sup>1</sup>A breed Rakasta with features similar to those of pumas.

<sup>2</sup>A breed Rakasta with features similar to those of Bengal tigers.

<sup>3</sup>A breed Rakasta with features similar to those of cloud leopards.

Table 3.2: Pachydermion level progression

Level	XP	HD
Child	-64000	3d8
Youngster	-56000	4d8
Teenager	-48000	5d8
Young Adult	-32000	6d8
Normal Monster	0	7d8
1	64000	8d8
2	128000	9d8
3	256000	—
4	512000	10d8
5	812000	11d8
6	1112000	12d8
7	1412000	—
8	1712000	13d8
9	2012000	14d8
+1 level	+300000	+2 HP

Table 3.3: Pachydermion ability score requirements

Ability	Min/Max	Adj.
Str	11/18	+2
Int	8/18	
Wis	8/18	+1
Dex	4/16	-2
Con	3/18	
Cha	3/18	-1

Thap, but wandering priests can be found everywhere on Patera and several communities can be found in northern Rajahstan. Myoshima is the home of a large number of Pachydermions of the Baku breed. Pachydermions progress in OD&D as shown in Table 3.2, and ability score requirements and modifiers are shown in Table 3.3. Baku Pachydermion have a Trumpet power that is identical to the Greater Rakasta roar, except that it affects only evil beings.

Pachydermions reach Large size at Teenager level; from that point on, they can use Large weapons in one hand (e.g., two-handed swords). Native pachydermion weapons are one die scale up with respect to normal weapons (e.g., a pachydermion battleaxe does 1d10, a dagger 1d6, etc.). Pachydermions may be magic users or clerics (not Wicca or Shamans, though

they use the same XP tables) up to level 12.

### 3.1.3 Aranea

These shapechanging spiders, or Tsuchigumo, have infiltrated the Rakasta society since the times of Plaktur. Few in numbers, but endowed with powerful magics, the Aranea are still present in modern Myoshima. Being longer-lived than the Rakasta, they tend to move around often to avoid suspicions, and use their powers to advance their own racial agenda. The entire race belongs to a secret society, with the long term goal of enstating an Aranea-dominated kingdom. Aranea characters are possible both in AD&D and OD&D, using the rules provided in the Savage Coast and the Voyage of the Princess Ark.

In OD&D, Myoshiman Aranea can progress as Thieves as well as Magic Users (they still require twice as many XP as the human class). They are not required to spend all their skill slots on the Acting skill, though many do so.

### 3.1.4 Monkey Folk

Monkey folk are common on Matera, but quite rare in Myoshima. They are generally similar to various types of great apes – Orang-houtan, gorillas and the like.

While the various Monkey Folk races are quite different from each other, they share some basic cultural elements, including the legend of the Monkey King (the Immortal Korotiku), the leader (though not the creator) of their race in a distant past. The Monkey King is known to have left Matera (though each race will relate a different version of the legend, including different reasons for leaving), promising to return to lead the Monkey Folk to rule a great kingdom in the mountains. Meanwhile, his three Generals (the Monster Rulers for the Vanara, Neshezu and Sasquatch races) hold power in his stead.

**Neshezu** +1 Dex, -1 Int; mov 6, climb 12, brachiate 15; forest cover; progress as Hobgoblin (OD&D); may be Shamans (level limit 8) or Wicca (4). Neshezues resemble great brachiating apes, with long

arms and short legs and a reddish fur, and their faces have somewhat orcish features. They are raiders and pirates, well known for using poison on their weapons. Neshezues are mostly found in the nation of Surabayang on Myoshima, and in the forests of Southern Herath on Mystara.

**Vanara** -1 Str, +1 Wis; mov 12, climb 9; infravision 60'; progress as Orcs; may be Shamans (level limit 16) and Wicca (6).

The Vanara are native of Matera, where they are common in the wildernesses of Rajahstan. They are a race of wise, shamanic monkeys with baboon-like physiques.

As a DM option, Vanara can use human classes, with a 10% XP penalty, instead of progressing like Orcs.

**Sasquatch** +2 Str, -2 Int; mov 15; natural attacks, natural AC 6; progresses as show in Table 3.1. Sasquatch can be Druid/Shamans (4) or Wicca (2). Sasquatch resemble large gorillas, though they are evidently more humanoid, with longer legs and a more upright posture. They are more primitive than the other Monkey Folk races, and shy from contact with other humanoids. They live in small clans, choosing high mountains or impassable forests as their home grounds.

In AD&D, the Monkey Folk have the same powers and abilities, and have the following level limits:

**Neshezu:** F 12, P 8, W 6, T 12.

**Vanara:** F 8, P 16, W 10, T 12.

**Sasquatch:** F 12, D 6, W 4.

All Monkey Folk Wizards must take the Wokan kit.

In the Empire of Myoshima, only the Sasquatch are found.

### 3.1.5 Tengu

Tengu are birdlike humanoids that exist in two forms: crow Tengu (*Karasutengu*) and humanoid Tengu (*Daitengu*). They are kind of a cross between the Gyerians and Faenare of Mystara. Crow Tengu have a crow head, while humanoid Tengu have a long nosed, red-skinned human head.

In OD&D, Humanoid Tengu progress like Faenare, except that they learn shamanic magic rather than druidic magic, and receive the polymorph self and shout spells (once per day per 2 HD, up to 3 times per day) instead of powers VIII and IV. Crow Tengu do not have access to shamanic magic and can use the two abovementioned powers as if they had 2 less HD (and up to twice per day), but only require 1/2 experience.

In AD&D, use the Aarakocra as a base, and add Alter Self and Shout 3/day starting at levels 1 and 2 respectively. Humanoid Tengu can be Priests up to 12 level, Crow Tengu cannot use spellcasting classes at all.

### 3.1.6 Fairies

The Fairies of Patera are grouped under a single Fairy court, under the collective rule of the Four Fairy Brothers.

Pooka are quite common in Myoshima, often appearing as raccoon dogs (*Tanuki*) or cats (*Bakeneko*). Other shapes (foxes, rabbits, monkeys) are uncommon, but appear from time to time.

Brownies are also present in the Empire, where they are known as *Zashiki-warashi*.

Drakes are envoys and spies of the Fairy Court. Most Drakes of Patera are able to take the shape of a Rakasta, though some may appear as young Pachydermions or even Monkey Folk. They have the same general statistics of Wooddrakes.

Most Fairies have the same statistics as the Mystaran Sidhe, but appear as Rakasta (often of exotic breeds).

## 3.2 Character Classes

All basic character classes are available to Myoshiman (Rakasta) characters. This section provides guidelines for using AD&D kits and OD&D character specializations for Myoshiman characters. Table 3.4 provides an overall picture of the character options for Myoshiman Rakasta.

Note that the Myoshiman social structure imposes some restrictions on female characters (much like

Ochalean society in Mystara): while female characters of all classes are available, not all are socially acceptable. Female Rakasta who belong to the Samurai caste are generally not warriors themselves. In general, Myoshimans frown upon warrior women, so Ashigaru women are also quite uncommon. Most warrior women are talented types who choose the way of the Kensei.

### 3.2.1 Warriors

Fighters are very common in Myoshima, due to the warlike character of the Rakasta. Due to the humid climate of Myoshima, warriors tend to rely less on heavy armor and more on mobility. Several different warrior specializations exist, and access is often regulated by law.

#### Ashigaru

Ashigaru (spearmen) are lower class warriors, wandering mercenaries or retainers to samurai. Like Samurai, Ashigaru are part of the social structure of the Empire – in the role of the foot soldiers in the armies and city guards. When left without master, they may turn into brigands or wandering mercenaries, known simply as Bushi.

Most Ashigaru are skilled in the use of the spear (yari), and in some kind of sword or dagger (though rarely in the matara and mishiya, which are reserved to the noble warriors). Other than that, their weapon skill tend to be very diverse.

Being poorer than most other warriors, Ashigaru tend to collect skills (or non-weapon proficiencies in AD&D) useful to acquire, maintain or craft weapons and armor. In OD&D, Ashigaru should select one Craft skill (either Weaponmaking or Armorer) and Bargaining among their beginning general skills, as well as Basic mastery in Spear or any one polearm.

#### Kensei

Kensei, or sword masters are an uncommon type of fighter – warriors devoted to perfecting their mastery of a single type of weapon. They are usually members of kenjutsu schools, mastering the matara, though

masters of other types of weapons (such as the staff, bow, or spear) can also be found.

Kensei are so focused on weapon mastery that they give little thought to social constraints, so female Kensei are unusually common. One notable school is entirely comprised of female Rakasta masters of the Naginata.

If weapon mastery is used (in OD&D), Kensei can devote one more weapon slot to their specialized weapon than other beginning characters (i.e., they can be Skilled if other characters can only have Basic proficiency). However, they cannot be more than Skilled in any other weapon, except unarmed combat. Kensei devoted to a school receive high level fighter combat options like Knights, even though they do not have any other benefit (social status, right of hospitality) of that specialization. Kensei must also take Craft (Weaponmaking), as well as one appropriate Martial Arts skill (see Section 3.4.1) at first level.

After obtaining Grand Mastery with their favorite weapon, the Kensei can continue specializing. For each slot spent on his favorite weapon, the Kensei can add one (reasonable) special effect from the Weapon Mastery list (except Double Damage, No Off Hand Penalty, and Strangle, which cost 2 slots each), or add a ST penalty (-1) to one existing effect, or extend one effect by one step (e.g., from Double Damage on 17-20, to Double Damage on 16-20). The DM must decide whether a given weapon can be used, even at extreme levels of mastery, to achieve the desired effect – e.g., Matara cannot be used for the Entangle effect, but it could deal Double Damage (on a natural 20).

#### Samurai

Noble warriors, well-versed in administration and courtly matters, the Samurai are the backbone of the Myoshiman armies as well as the civil administration, at least in the countryside, as senior Samurai often become minor landed lords, stewards for more powerful nobles.

Myoshiman Samurai specialize in handling traditional paired swords, matara and mishiya, and ride sabretooth tigers in battle. They receive equivalent benefits and hindrances as Mystaran Honorbounds (AD&D) or Knights (OD&D). The Samurai train-



ing includes the skills of Riding (Sabretooth Tiger), Art(Poetry) and Reading/Writing (which should not be automatic in this setting), as well as the Myoshiman court language, as well as Basic mastery of Matara, Mishiya and Daikyu. One half of his further skill slots must be spent on courtly skills. Moreover, he must take Basic mastery in Matara, Mishiya and Daikyu at first level, and should not take mastery in weapons traditionally associated with the ninja. A Samurai cannot be Chaotic, and is only rarely Neutral. The uncommon female Samurai takes Basic mastery in Naginata and Tanto instead of Matara and Mishiya.

A Samurai's mount is always a sabretooth tiger. The tiger is initially provided by the character's lord, and cannot be used for personal reasons. A PC Samurai can purchase his own mount once he has learnt the Animal Handling (Sabretooth Tiger) skill, for 3,000 gp.

A renegade Samurai, or one that has lost his master for any reason, becomes a Ronin. Ronin are wandering fighters, generally trying to exact vengeance on whatever deprived them of their status – or simply trying to survive the loss of station and wealth.

### **Sohei**

Temple warriors, or Sohei, are also quite common, especially in southern Myoshima. They generally gather in large temples where they worship either Shima or the spirits. Sometimes, experienced warriors wishing to retire from the world choose to become Sohei late in their career, but others may have joined the temple at a young age.

Sohei have the powers and restrictions of Paladins (OD&D) or Lawful Defenders (AD&D). They are required to take the Ceremony (Shima) or Spirit Lore skill, and to have Basic mastery of two weapons chosen among the Naginata, Tetsubo, Hand axe and Battle axe. Other religious or martial skills are recommended. Sohei must be Lawful.

### **Yamabito**

Yamabito, or mountain barbarians, are only found among outsider races, such as the Mountain Rakasta

and the Sasquatch.

They are stealthy, cunning warriors that exploit at best the knowledge of their home terrain, but are considered cowardly and honorless by the civilized Samurai. Yamabito are more likely to use ranged or thrown weapons, as well as simple weapons like clubs or axes. They are never trained to use matara or mishiya at first level, though they can learn those masteries later in their career.

In OD&D, they can progress in their understanding of the land to the point of obtaining powers from the spirits of nature, just like Druidic Knights. These powers are bestowed with the help of the tribe's shamans (who are Neutrally aligned Shinkan, see below). The Yamabito's relation to these shamans is similar to that of a Druidic Knight with his druids patrons.

At first level, the Yamabito must take the Stealth and Survival skills for his home terrain (mountains), as well as the Mountaineering skill. Skills such as Hunting and Tracking are also popular with these characters. Yamabito characters must be Neutral.

### **3.2.2 Wizards**

Wizardly magic, or *youjutsu* (supernatural technique), is an honorable, if uncommon, occupation for a Myoshiman. Mastery of Myoshiman magic requires both mental training to master the precise calligraphic skill needed to copy magical formulae and manual dexterity, since most Myoshiman spells require the use of somatic components in the form of highly complicated cat's cradle figures. These requirements, as well as the short temper and attention span of most Rakasta, lead the Myoshiman wizards to focus on schools of magic that require dexterity rather than insight or physical resilience.

Myoshiman Wu Jen are generally solitary, though some families with strong magic-using traditions exist. These characters tend to be unpredictable and unconcerned with the society at large, an attitude that is shocking to the average Myoshiman. Few, however, even challenge wizards on points of honor or etiquette. For this reason, few Wu Jen are Lawful.

In OD&D, Myoshiman wizards use the Hakomon rules from the Golden Khan of Ethengar Gazetteer.

Table 3.4:

Specialization	Class	AD&D Kit	OD&D Skills or Specialization
Samurai	Fighter	Honorbound	<i>Knight</i> ; Art (Poetry), Reading/Writing, Riding (Sabretooth)
Ashigaru	Fighter	Myrmidon	Armorer or Weaponsmith, Bargaining
Kensei	Fighter	Chujen	Weaponsmith, Alertness
Yamabito	Ranger	Savage	<i>Druidic Knight</i> ; Survival, Stealth, Mountaineering
Sohei	Fighter	Defender	<i>Paladin</i>
Souryo	Fighter	Chujen	<i>Mystic</i>
Wu Jen	Wizard	Wu Jen	<i>Hakomon</i>
Shimaja	Cleric	Shugenja	<i>Cleric of Ganetra</i>
Shinkan	Cleric	Shaman	<i>Shaman</i>
Biku	Cleric	Fighting Monk	<i>Mystic</i>
Yakuza	Thief	Yakuza	<i>Fence/Bawd</i>
Kabukimono	Thief	Gypsy	<i>Fence/Bawd</i>
Shinobi	Thief		<i>Super Thief</i> ; Disguise, Acrobatics, Alertness, Acting
Nobushi	Thief	Bandit	Intimidation, Survival

Like their Mystaran counterparts, Myoshiman wizards have developed secret crafts, called *Okuden* that enhance their skills. Rakasta magic users favor Summoning, Illusions, Enchantments and Transformations. They can therefore access the crafts of Ailuro-mancy (Kuchiyose no Jutsu), Illusions (Genyou no Jutsu), Shadow Mastery (Kage Jutsu), Cryptomancy (Fuin no Jutsu), Witchcraft (Shintenshin no Jutsu), and Alchemy (Henge no Jutsu).

Wu Jen must take the Read/Write language and Sigil Lore skills at first level.

### Summoning

Myoshiman wizards are especially adepts at summoning spells – an art called *Kuchiyose no Jutsu*. Many favor cats as summons, but unusual characters will summon almost any animal, save for dogs, wolves and other canines, which they find difficult to control. Summoning items is another application of this art, which is both versatile and powerful in combat, two traits that are very important for the Myoshiman magic user. The most powerful wizards can summon extraplanar forces, bringing them on par with the

most powerful human wizards of Mystara.

The summoning Okuden is the Secret Craft of Ailuro-mancy.<sup>4</sup>

### Illusionism

The Rakasta's natural intelligence and dexterity gives the Myoshiman mages a propension for powerful sensory and mental Illusions, covered by the art named *Genyou no Jutsu*. Many Myoshiman mages devote most of their training to these arts. Moreover, this ability extends to the control of shadows (*Kage Jutsu*), making Myoshiman illusionists equal to the powerful Glantrian dream masters.

The genyou Okuden is the Secret Craft of Illusions, while the Okuden of shadow magic is the Secret Craft of Shadow Mastery.<sup>5</sup>

### Enchantment

The “art of changing heart” (*Shintenshin no Jutsu*) allows wily Rakastan sorcerers (and sorceresses) to

<sup>4</sup>See <http://www.pandius.com/ailuroma.html>

<sup>5</sup>See <http://www.pandius.com/shadmast.html>

be effective in espionage and subversion – they are therefore highly prized as agents by the powerful noble clans.

The seal technique (*Fuin Jutsu*), on the other hand, is much less common, and may be more powerful, as it is the art of embedding magic within objects and beings. The art gets its name from the fact that most enchanters use written characters as a focus for the magical energies that must be bound into the target object or person – etched or painted seals are most often used.

Shintenshin no Okuden is represented by the Secret Art of Witchcraft, while Fuin no Okuden is based on Cryptomancy, except that the Seal Master must always inscribe a seal (circular pattern of Myoshiman inscriptions) to evoke the effects.

### Alteration

The art of transformation (*Henge no Jutsu*) deals with altering the nature of objects and people. Another technique where manual dexterity and intelligence are key to success, transformation and manipulation of matter, including alchemy, are well developed among the Myoshiman Rakasta, though their users tend to be less flamboyant than most other magic users.

Henge no Jutsu is a Myoshiman version of the Secret Craft of Alchemy.

### Other arts

Myoshiman wizards generally abhor necromantic practices. These arts are forbidden across the whole empire, and Imperial magic users and shamans investigate any rumor of necromantic activity. As to the arts of invocation, evocation and abjuration, Myoshimans do practice them, but never focus prevalently on these schools: not only they deal with the rawest form of magical power, making them a less than respected field among the Myoshimans, who consider themselves highly cultured and refined, but only the foolish magic user would focus all his talent in combat or defensive ability – scouting, intelligence, and subterfuge are all equally important. As to divination, this is another case where an important art is not

considered worthy to be studied alone: the Myoshiman mage is rarely an academic or philosopher – he must be fit for combat and stealth as well. Moreover, most Rakasta do not have the patience or wisdom needed to focus on divination or abjuration.

Elementalism is a completely different matter: the Myoshiman Empire covets the power of the Elements, which has all but eluded the reach of most Rakasta magic users for centuries. The secrecy in which most Myoshiman magic users conduct their researches into Elementalism has led, indeed, to a lack of true specialization in the subject. This may change in the near future, as the discovery of the Alphantian Empire has only made the Rakasta more aggressive in their research, as Elementalism is now seen as the major advantage of the Alphantians over the Myoshiman Empire in the field of magic.

### 3.2.3 Priests

Clerics are common both in the countryside and in the cities. Two major religions are present: Shima-do (the Way of Shima) and Kami-do (the Way of the Spirits). Both revere more or less the same set of Immortals, though in the former Shima (a.k.a. Ganetra, the Pachydermion Immortal) is the most important deity, while in the latter, Ayatori (known as Bastet to other Rakasta cultures) fills this role. Shima-do is more concerned with the spreading of culture and civilization, while Kami-do is more concerned with living in harmony with nature. Also, Kami-do extends worship to many lesser entities, including nature and ancestor spirits.

### Shimaja

Shimaja are priests of the Shima-do, and worship primarily the Immortal Shima, known elsewhere as Ssuma or Ganetra. They are generally of good nature and Lawful alignment, though they can also be Neutral.

In OD&D, Shimaja are Clerics, with the following granted powers: a permanent +1 bonus to Intelligence and a free Concentration skill. Moreover, they can use the spells Analyze, Read Languages, and Lore in addition to the standard clerical list. Shimaja must

take the Read/Write language, Religion (Shima-do) and Ceremony (Shima) skills at first level.

Shimaja have access to the standard clerical weapon selection, but their favored weapons are staff (for its use as a traveller's tool) and mace (a traditional Pachydermion weapon).

### Shinkan

Shinkan are priests of the Kami-do. They are generally of Neutral alignment, though Lawful priests are also common in the cities and especially at court, and some Chaotic Shinkan are found as well. Female Kami-do priestesses are common, and are known as shrine maidens (*miko*).

In OD&D, Shinkan are Shamans as per the Golden Khan of Ethengar Gazetteer, with the following modifications: Myoshiman Shamans know a variant of the Hold Person spell that is effective on the undead; they can be of any alignment, though Lafwul Shamans receive, instead of an animal spirit guide, an ancestor spirit guide. This has several effects. First, the ability score bonus depends on the class of the ancestor – Strength if he or she was a warrior, Intelligence if magic user, Wisdom if priest and Dexterity if rogue. The uncommon Bard (Kabukimono) ancestors gives a Charisma bonus, and non-classed ancestors bestow a Constitution bonus. The ancestor spirit also gives to the character an Intelligence-based skill related to his own knowledge (usually Knowledge of a given area or part of history, but languages and professional knowledge are also possible), and the Danger Sense skill. At 12th level, the character becomes able to contact more powerful spirits, who help him by using their powers, generally related to the dead and their knowledge – equivalent to spells such as Speak with the Dead and Commune, cast at the level of the Shinkan. These powerful spirits may be contacted once per day, with a ceremony requiring one hour. On the other hand, Shinkan with ancestor spirit guides do not receive the shapechange and animal language powers. Chaotic Shinkan may choose to have either an animal or an ancestor spirit guide, while Neutral Shinkan always have animal guides.

Shinkan must take the Spirit Lore, Ceremony (Kami-do) and Religion (Kami-do) skills at first level.

Shinkan may only use swords, bows, spears or staves.

### Monks

Both religions also support monastic orders. Shima-do monks are called Buki, while Kami-do monks are called Souryo. In OD&D, Souryo are Mystics who can get the usual acrobatic abilities, while the Buki can receive, instead of acrobatics and at the same cost, clerical spells as priests of Shima of 1/2 their level, round down<sup>6</sup>.

Buki and Souryo must get the same initial skills as Shimaja and Shinkan, respectively.

### 3.2.4 Rogues

Thieves in Myoshima can follow several paths, depending on the type of criminal activity and organization preferred.

Class specializations drawn from *Gaz F8 Streets of Landfall* are used for most OD&D Thief specializations in the rest of this section.

Note that while many specialization are provided, it is by no means necessary that a Thief character belong to one. Many thieves in Myoshima are simple pickpockets or burglars (*nusubito*).

### Kabukimono

Kabukimono are wandering gypsy-like folk, who mostly act as peddlers, selling herbal remedies or other uncommon goods, as well as gamblers, actors, and sometimes thieves or swindlers. They are generally independent, though in some provinces they have banded together in Yakuza-like organizations.

Kabukimono are dual class Thieves/Fences or, more commonly, Bards/Fences. Their primary skills (used for the Skill progression ability) are Gambling, Cheating, Bargaining, Acting and Deceiving. Kabukimono tend to use small, concealable weapons, or weapons that double as tools, especially staves, daggers, and rope weapons.

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<sup>6</sup>This assumes the standard 16-levels progression for Mystics is used. If the alternate 36-levels progression is used, spells are acquired as those of Paladins

Kabukimono often gather in troupes. By far the less formal type of rogue organization, Kabukimono troupes are groups of itinerant peddlers, gamblers, *biwa-hoshi* (musicians), and actors who gather for protection against bandits, yakuza, the law and class discrimination (entertainers and merchants are the lowest class in Myoshima, and Kabukimono are usually poor, which doesn't help).

Some troupes act as a form of carnival, travelling together in a given province, while others are more similar to bardic colleges of other nations, being just information networks which the member can access to know where to travel and where not, keep up to date with the local gossip (which is also part of the trade of the Kabukimono, who act as wandering storytellers and newsmonger as well), and sometimes to avenge gross injustices against one of their own.

Kabukimono troupes have no formal structure, but generally recognize elder and charismatic members as leaders of sorts.

### **Nobushi**

Bandits (Nobushi) are common in the wildernesses, especially in impoverished regions, where there are few employment opportunities, and most goods only pass through in merchant caravans bound to richer provinces.

In OD&D, Nobushi are simple Thieves, who use a d6 Hit Die, but do not learn the Open Locks, Find Traps and Remove Traps skills. Fighters (Bushi) with the Stealth skill are also found in most Nobushi bands. Nobushi must also get the Survival skill for their home terrain, as well as the Intimidation skill at first level.

Nobushi tend to choose simple weapons that look dangerous, to better scare their victims. Swords, axes and clubs are popular with these characters, though many will also learn the use of missile or thrown weapons.

### **Shinobi**

Ninja (or Shinobi) are assassins employed by the noble families. They tend to operate mostly in the cities, but keep secret lairs in the jungles as well

to avoid retaliation from the law or the victims' families. Female Shinobi exist, and are known as Kunoichi.

There are dozens of Shinobi clans – at least one in every province, but they are usually quite small (a dozen or so members). A smaller number of clans have influence over more than one province, and have more members – up to 200 for huge clans such as the Urumi.

All Shinobi excel in disguises and acting, and are able to pass themselves off as commoners, samurai, priests or any other social class. Many of them spend most of their time in a single disguise, which allows them to conduct a normal life when not engaged in clan business.

The clans are organized along several ranks, all reporting to a single clan leader. Senior shinobi, or Jounin, form the upper rank, and are responsible of major operations involving several operatives. Middle-rank shinobi, or Chuunin, are the rank and file clan members, while Genin, or apprentices, form the lowest rung of the social ladder. Experience and ability, as well as trustworthiness, are the basis on which the shinobi is judged.

Membership in a ninja clan is for life – no one resigns, though elderly ninja may retire from active duty (except for emergencies). Leaving the organization guarantees a death mark on the head of the betrayer.

Shinobi use a set of traditional weapon, including a type of short sword (Ninja-to), thrown weapons (shuriken and kunai), the kama, and several types of chain and rope weapons (manriki-gusari, musarigama, kawanaga). The character must spend at least one half of his weapon proficiency or mastery slots on such weapons, or Ninjutsu.

In OD&D, Shinobi start as basic Thieves (and must take the Disguise, Acrobatics, Alertness, Acting skills, as well as Basic mastery in Ninja-to and Shuriken at first level), but can choose three different paths: the Taijutsu specialist, dealing mostly with hand to hand combat, the Genjutsu specialist, focusing on illusionary techniques, and the Ninpo specialist, a type of Shinobi who studies and controls the supernatural abilities that are part of most Shinobi clan heritage. There are ability score requirements

for each of the three specialization: Taijutsu requires 13 Strength, Genjutsu requires 13 Intelligence, and Ninpo requires 13 Wisdom.

The Ninpo specialist has the same powers as the Super Thief from Gaz F8, but the training can start at any level (though 3 levels of training are still required before the first power is gained). The Ninpo specialist can choose from an extended list that includes the following abilities:

**Water walking** : the character can walk on water or other liquid surfaces, for 2 rounds/level.

**Pass without trace** : as the Druid spell, cast at the character's level.

**Featherfall** : the character takes half damage from a fall; this power can be activated as the ninja is falling, and only affects a single fall.

**Fast movement** : the character gains the speed of a Mystic of the same level, lasting for 2 rounds/level.

If the specialization is taken before 9th level, the character can only select abilities from the extended list hereabove, until he reaches the 12th level.

The Genjutsu user has similar powers to an Avenger or Paladin, in that he receives the powers of another class at 1/3 of his current level: the Genjutsu user uses the spell progression of a Magic User, though his spell selection is limited to illusions, plus a few enchantment spells that act on the target's mind. Genjutsu spells from official sources are listed in Table 3.5, though the DM may add to the given list other illusion or mind magic spells.

The Taijutsu specialist gains the bonus Weapon Mastery slot as a Fighter, a +1 to hit rolls, and can use two handed weapons of the chain group. If this specialization is taken after first level, the character receives one Weapon Mastery slot immediately, and one after 3 levels, and must use these two slots to gain Basic masteries in Ninja-specific weapons.

Larger ninja clans are not entirely composed of Shinobi – these organizations require specialists in other areas, especially magic and combat, as well as non-specialists that help provide a cover to the

clan and perform everyday tasks, much like the auxiliaries in an army. Therefore, larger ninja clans will have Ashigaru or Kensei combat specialists (employed both as guards and as weapon trainers) and Magic Users (employed as alchemists, advisors, and genjutsu trainers), who will generally have at least some general skills typical of the Shinobi, plus the Stealth skill. This way, a type of campaign where all characters are part of the same ninja clan can be managed, using fighter-types and magic users to further increase the flexibility of the party. A PC Fighter or Magic User belonging to a Shinobi clan must get at least 1/2 of his general skills from the following list, until it is exhausted: Disguise, Stealth (Urban), Stealth (home ground), Escape, Acting, Mountaineering, Acrobatics, Alertness. Also, all initial weapon proficiencies (barring those required by the Fighter specialization, if any) must be filled with ninja weapons or Ninjutsu.

Like Samurai, ninja are also bound to a master – in their case, the leader of their shinobi family. If they fall out of favor or dishonor the family, Shinobi are marked for death. So, few rogue Shinobi exist – but those few are highly skilled, since they are able to evade pursuit from other ninja, and very dangerous, since they cannot trust anyone, except sometimes other rogue Shinobi. These rogues are known as Nukenin, and generally act on their own as bandits or thieves. Being already marked for death, they are ruthless in covering up their crime by murdering all witnesses.

## Yakuza

Urban Thieves in Myoshima focus their activities around the local equivalent of the Thieves' Guild, much more than their Mystaran counterparts. Yakuza organizations (*kumi*) are found in most major cities. They control organized crime, including racketeering, gambling, and most other illegal activities. Yakuza are very aggressive against rival guilds and independents, thus preserving a semblance of order in the districts they control.

Yakuza prefer weapons that can be hidden or disguised easily, such as daggers, clubs, staves, or even claws.

Table 3.5: Shinobi Genjutsu spells

1st level	2nd level	3rd level
Charme Darkness Fellowship (GAZ5) Pass without trace (GAZ12) Sleep Ventriloquism	Faerie Fire (D1) Fear (GAZ5) Invisibility Mirror Image Phantasmal Force Silence (GAZ8)	Invisibility, 10' Hold Person Obscure (D2) Silence, 15' (C2) Slow
4th level	5th level	6th level
Charm Monster Confusion Hallucinatory Terrain Massmorph Steal Breath (HWR3)	Feeblemind Hold Monster Polymorph Self (MU4)	Mass Invisibility (MU7) Projected Image

Yakuza are dual class Thieves/Fences or Fighters/Fences in OD&D, or even Thieves with the Consignie specialization (see GAZ F8 for these). Their primary skills (used for the Skill progression ability) are Street Lore, Gambling, Intimidation, and Cheating. Contrary to other Thieves, Yakuza are often Lawful, and rarely Chaotic.

Yakuza are sedentary characters – most Yakuza live in one of the imperial cities, or in one of the provincial capitols, and never leave the town. Some, however, are forced to travel away from their hometown, sometimes because they fall out of favor with their *oyabun* (gang leader), sometimes because their criminal activities draw too much attention from the local government. These travelling Yakuza are called *Matatabi*.

Yakuza gangs, or *kumi*, have a simple but effective type of organization, modeled on the clan structure – a "father", the *oyabun*, directs the operations of the "sons", or *kobun*. Larger organizations may have more layers between the head of the family and the low-rank members, but this is common only in large towns. Each gang has a set territory, either a town or a part of it, though they may have allied gangs in other towns.

Most Yakuza groups focus in either running a protection racket, or catering to the vices of the affluent by means of gambling and pleasure houses.

Contrary to Thieves' Guild of other nations, the

Yakuza usually enjoy a great deal of protection from the law enforcement agencies – the Samurai and the town guards – who generally ignore them in exchange for "donations", provided that the Yakuza do not target the upper classes – and since most criminal activities of the Yakuza actually deal with squeezing the lower classes, merchant and craftsmen, the law enforcers have very little reason to work against them. However, major crimes, such as murder, force even the most tolerant guard to prosecute the Yakuza.

Yakuza gangsters tattoo their skins with designs that indicate their seniority in the organization. They then let their pelt grow back over the tattoo, making it invisible to a casual onlooker.

### 3.3 Social Status

Social status is important to most Myoshimans, and extremely important for Samurai and similar characters.

The Myoshiman society is organized along four castes – in decreasing order of status, nobles, farmers, craftsmen and merchants. The merchant caste includes not only merchants, rich or poor, but also other families that do not fit into one of the other castes – for example, entertainers. The noble caste includes the samurai, both those with stewardships and those living of a stipend from another noble, *daimyo* families, and the court nobility.

Table 3.6: Caste and family wealth of player characters

Merchant	1 or less	Poor	2 or less
Craftsman	2-3	Modest	3-6
Farmer	4-9	Well-to-do	7-9
Noble	10+	Rich	10+

### 3.3.1 Player Character family

All player characters, with the exception of Yamabito, should belong to a caste, though this may be more or less relevant – priestly characters, especially those of Shima-do faith, have foregone their past status, and are respected by everybody, regardless of their native caste. Other characters are more appreciated within their own caste, and upper caste NPC may show disrespect of lower caste characters.

Kabukimono automatically belong to the merchant caste, while Samurai belong to the noble caste. Other characters roll on Table 3.6 to find their family's caste. Yakuza roll 1d4, Ninja roll 1d6 (this defines the cover used by their family), all other characters roll 1d10.

Then, all character roll on the family wealth subsection of Table 3.6. Characters of the Merchant caste roll 1d12-1 (merchants may be a lower class, but they are often richer than most). Characters of the Craftsman and Farmer caste roll 1d8, while those of the noble caste roll 1d10.

Poor and Modest noble families are those of Samurai who have not achieved a jito stewardship, while Rich families are those with a shugo (80%), high court nobility (10%) or even daiymo (10%) family head. Characters who roll a daimyo or high court nobility family must choose one of the named families from Chapter ?? as their own. Note that there is no opportunity to belong to the imperial family – this option is not really desirable, since members of the imperial family almost never leave Mara.

Last, the place of birth of the character can be determined by rolling on Table 3.7. Farmers roll 1d6, Craftsmen and Merchants roll 1d10, while Nobles roll 1d8+2. Add +1 for Well-to-do families and +3 for Rich families.

However, court nobility, daimyo and shugo families

Table 3.7: Place of birth of player characters

Hamlet	1-2
Village	3-5
Large Village	6-7
Provincial Capitol	8-9
Imperial Town	10+

are automatically assigned to Mara, a provincial capitol, or a large village, respectively, while Jito families are assigned to a village.

### Barbarians

Yamabito, Sasquatch and other such characters exist outside the Myoshiman social order. Barbarian tribes have their own class system, generally recognizing a single ruling clan, and a number of other families whose prestige is determined by their hunting prowess.

A Yamabito character has about 10% chance of being a scion of the ruling clan, and a likely chance of being an outcast in his own tribe.

### 3.3.2 Myoshiman Ranks and Titles

This section gives a glossary of ranks, titles and honorifics used in Myoshima.

While these are based on real-world equivalents, the correspondence is by no means precise, and several terms have been adapted to fit the different history of Myoshima. For example, the term *shikken* (holder of power) was used in Japan by the regents for an underage Shogun. In Myoshima, the Shogunate is a temporary position without administrative powers, and therefore there are no shikken in the historical sense. The word, however, has been used as a title by a specific individual who acted as a regent for Emperor Myotori without being of the imperial house.

### Court and Feudal Titles

The following are the most common or important ranks of the Myoshiman government, including his-



torical terms used before the establishment of the Empire.

**Bugyou** Bureaucrat; a general title for middle and low-ranking members of the civil administration.

**Daijin** Great minister; this court title is assigned to members of the Council of State that also have executive power over some branch of the government. There are four such ministers: the chancellor of state (daijodaijin), the minister of the left (sadaijin), the minister of the right (udaijin) and the minister of the center (nadaijin), in decreasing order of status.

**Dainagon** Great counsellor; this court title is assigned to members of the Council of State that have no direct executive power.

**Daimyo** Feudal lord; this title was first used by the chiefs of lesser clans who had broken away from the Great Houses. In modern times, it designates an hereditary provincial governor. This title is roughly equivalent to a Duke or Archduke in the Thyatian system.

**Hiko** Prince; title awarded to the sons of an emperor. The corresponding female title is Hime.

**Jito** Steward; this is the title, roughly equivalent to a landed knight in the Thyatian and Karameikan system, used by samurai who have received a land stewardship from their daimyo.

**Okimi** King; this historical title was assumed by the leaders of the Great Houses during the Three Hundred Years war.

**Sessho** Regent; used to designate a relative of an infant Emperor who acts as regent (this happened often during the late era of the Time of Retreat).

**Shikken** Regent; this title was used only by Kakureshi Kuromaru during his time as regent and then prime minister for Emperor Myotori.

**Shogun** Warlord; this title was first used to designate a temporary war leader of the Shujin council. It became permanent at the time of the Kamakura Shogunate, and once more temporary (and seldom used) after the fall of the second Kamakura Shogun. In modern times, it designates the leader of a Myoshiman expeditionary force, or the commander in chief of Myoshiman defence forces, in case the Empire is attacked. Frequently used in the last century, it now holds a considerable power.

**Shugo** Warden; vassal of the provincial daimyo. This title is roughly equivalent to Baron or Count in the Karameikan and Thyatian system.

**Shujin** Clanmaster; this historical title was used by the leaders of major clans before the Kamakura Shogunate.

#### Honorific Name Suffixes

Polite Myoshimans address each other appending suffixes to the names or titles. For example, one should address the daiymo of Ichiyoda as Katayama-dono or Katayama-kou, depending on whether the speaker is of comparable status or not. Some of these suffixes can also be used alone – e.g., one could address Katayama-dono simply as *tono*.

**-gimi** Honorific reserved to the heads of the Great Houses. Not much used anymore, except within some of the Great Houses, as it implies a claim of independence from the Empire. The corresponding female title is -himegimi.

**-hiko** Appended to the names of imperial princes. The corresponding female title is -hime.

**-kou** Honorific appended to the names of members of the council of state, or to those of daimyo. Implies a higher status than the speaker. If it is not the case, -dono is used instead.

**-dono** Honorific appended to the names of noble warriors (usually shugo or jito, but also daimyo, when the speaker is of equal rank). For females, -sama or -gozen are used instead. Can also be used alone, in the address form, *tono*.

**-sama** Appended to the name of nobles or other people of higher status than the speaker. It can also be appended to job names.

**-sensei** Honorific appended to teachers or acknowledged masters of a given art (not exclusively martial). Can also be used alone.

**-san** Standard honorific, implies equal status with the speaker. Can be used for both males and females.

**-senpai** Honorific appended to a senior student's name, when the speaker is a junior student of the same sensei. Can also be used alone.

**-kun** This suffix is appropriate for young males (except young nobles, for whom -wakadono is more appropriate).

**-chan** A diminutive suffix appended to young girl names, and occasionally to other females.

## 3.4 Martial Arts Schools

Given the high number of warriors in the Myoshiman Empire, there is a considerable request for skilled trainers. Moreover, the tradition of studying a single weapon or unarmed fighting style to great detail as given origin to many fencing and unarmed combat schools.

For what concerns unarmed combat, the original art brought from Plaktur was a direct, offensive style geared toward the use of the natural attacks of the Rakasta. Its descendant, Nekotsume-do, still has the same characteristics, and is studied by peasants, who cannot afford weapons, but also by members of the Plakturian Great Houses.

Other martial arts have developed from Rajahstani teachings brought by the mystics of the Shima-do. These arts focus more on throws and locks. Juuken (Gentle Fist) is a typical throwing style, practiced mostly by Monks. Tsukamijutsu, on the other hand, is a wrestling form studied by Samurai to complement weapon combat.

A more mysterious art is Ninjutsu, the art practiced by Shinobi. A defensive style, it is geared toward evasion and misdirection, and is used by ninja to buy time while waiting for allies to arrive, or to create an opportunity to escape.

A given school will generally teach a single unarmed art, and possibly one or a few weapon forms (rarely more than three, unless only the basics are taught). For example, Ichiyoda Ryu, a Nekotsume-do school favored by Samurai of the House of Katayama (it is the native style of their home province, Ichiyoda), teaches that unarmed combat form as well as Matarado, the study of the traditional Samurai weapons. Other Nekotsume schools, those that teach to peasants, favor the Nunchaku and other small, easily concealed weapons (Kama, Tonfa, Sai, Jitte).

Juukens schools rarely teach weapons, though sometimes the Bo (staff) or Daikyu (great bow) are taught.

Ninjutsu is only taught to Shinobi within their clans, together with typical ninja weapons (Ninja-to, Shuriken, and several chain and rope weapons).

Tsukamijutsu is generally taught in combination with Matarado to upper class pupils, but in combination with the Naginata, Bo, or other weapons to Sohei, priests, and lower class warriors.

Some schools teach exclusively to women, generally focusing on Naginata, war fan (Gunsen), dagger (Tanto), and sometimes adding Juuken, as an unarmed combat form that requires little strength from the practitioner.

### 3.4.1 Martial Skills

Many Martial Arts schools traditionally teach a few general skills in addition to Weapon Masteries. The following skills are taught in Martial Arts dojos, and should be limited to those characters who have at least some martial arts training:

Table 3.8: Juuken (Throwing, P=H)

Mastery	Damage	Defense	Special
Basic	1	-	Block (1)
Skilled	1d2	H:-1 CA/1	Block (2), Throw (ST -1)
Expert	1d4	H:-1 CA/2	Block (2), Throw (ST -2)
Master	P: 1d6 S: 1d4	H:-2 CA/2	Block (3), Throw (ST -3), Ground (20)
Grand Master	P: 1d6 +2 S: 1d4 +1	H:-2 CA/3	Block (3), Throw (ST -5), Ground (20)

Table 3.9: Nekotsume (Offensive, P=H)

Mastery	Damage	Defense	Special
Basic	1d3	-	KO (20)
Skilled	1d6	H:-1 CA/1	KO (19-20)
Expert	2d4	H:-1 CA/2	KO (19-20, ST -1), Delay
Master	P: 2d4+3	H:-2 CA/2	KO (18-20, ST -2), Delay (ST -1)
Grand Master	P: 2d6+2 S: 1d8+2	H:-2 CA/3	KO (17-20, ST -3), Delay (ST -2), Extra attack

Table 3.10: Tsukamijutsu (Wrestling, P=H)

Mastery	Damage	Defense	Special
Basic	1	-	+1 WR, Ground (20)
Skilled	1d2	-	+2 WR, Ground (19-20), Stun
Expert	1d4	H:-1 CA/1	+4 WR, Ground (18-20), Stun (ST -1)
Master	P: 1d6 S: 1d4	H:-2 CA/2	+6 WR, Ground (17-20), Stun (ST -2)
Grand Master	P: 2d4 S: 1d6+1	H:-2 CA/3	+8 WR, Ground (16-20), Stun (ST -4)

Table 3.11: Ninjutsu (Defensive, P=A)

Mastery	Damage	Defense	Special
Basic	1d2	-	Delay
Skilled	1d4	A:-1 CA/1	Stun, Block (1)
Expert	1d6	A:-2 CA/2	Stun (ST -1), Block (2)
Master	1d6+1	A:-2 CA/3	Stun (ST -2), Block (3)
Grand Master	2d4	A:-3 CA/3	Stun (ST -2), Block (4)

- Offensive Martial Arts (Str)
- Duelling (Int)
- Awareness (Wis)
- Blind Dodge (Wis)
- Blind Fighting (Wis)
- *Chi Strike* (Wis)
- Bravery (Wis)
- *Reverse Strength* (Dex)
- Ambidexterity (Dex)
- Defensive Martial Arts (Dex)
- Dodge (Dex)
- Fast Draw (Dex)
- Jump (Dex)
- *Wind in the Reeds* (Dex)
- Cool (Cha)

**Chi Strike (Wis)** The character is able to hit creatures only vulnerable to silver or magic weapon,

	13	Silver	
	13-15	+1	
depending on the skill level:	16-17	+2	This
	18-19	+3	
	20	+4	

skill does not provide bonuses, it only allows the character to hit creature he would not be normally able to damage.

**Wind in the Reeds (Dex)** The character can raise from the ground without losing a round.

**Prone Fighting (Dex)** The character can fight from the ground without penalties.

**Reverse Strength (Wis)** When using this skill, the character does not apply his own Strength bonus to damage, but the opponent's bonus, as he redirects the enemy's strength against him.

The Martial skills listed above can generally be combined with any Martial Art style, with the following exceptions:

- Defensive Martial Arts cannot be taken (or used) with Offensive styles, and vice versa.
- Reverse Strength can only be taken with Defensive or Throwing styles.
- Prone Fighting cannot be taken with Throwing styles.
- Fast Draw can only be taken with weapon mastery.
- Chi Strike can only be taken by Experts in unarmed martial arts styles.

### 3.4.2 Sample Schools

This section presents some of the more popular (or famous) martial arts schools. Note that there are many more schools, and every province is likely to have its own styles, and its own favored weapons as well.

**Ichiyoda Ryu** This school, native of the Ichiyoda province, teaches Nekotsume, as well as the use of the Matara, and the skills Fast Draw and Duelling. The style is controlled and formal, well suited to honorable duelists of aristocratic bearing. The level of training is excellent – the school has Grand Master trainers in both Matara and Nekotsume.

**Daikode Ryu** Developed in the turbulent Senbei province, this school focuses on War Claws and Nekotsume, and teaches the skills Offensive Martial Arts (known as Tetsukode and taught only to Skilled practitioners of Nekotsume), Awareness and Jump. This style is known for its aggressive clawing technique, used both with and without War Claws, and for its focus on powerful blows rather than precise

strikes. The school is widespread, but not as good as others – even the best trainers rarely surpass Master level in either War Claws and Nekotsume.

**Nashi no Tsuki** This style, taught by several rival schools in the eastern provinces of Myoshima, combines Tsukamijutsu with weapon training, focusing on the Nunchaku and Kusarigama (different school). Its practitioners are known for their ability in Prone Fighting.

**Nueteki no Naginata-do** A primarily weapon style, designed for the female members of House Nueteki. It focuses on the Naginata, but the Gensen and Tanto are also taught (up to Expert level only). The only skill taught is Dodge. This style is only taught within the Great House Nueteki.

**Shima no Daiken** A style developed by the Biku, Shima no Daiken (“Great Fist of Shima”) relies only on the staff (Bo) to complement Juuken. All monks develop abilities similar to Chi Strike and Awareness, and pass what they can to lay practitioners of the style as well, but the trademark of the style is the Reverse Strength ability. There are only a few Grand Master teachers, but Expert-level trainers are common, and basic training can be obtained almost for free – especially for poor students.

**Gendo Ryu Matara-jutsu** A fencing school focused on duelling, Gendo Ryu complement excellent Matara teaching (Grand Master level) with several useful skills, including Duelling, Fast Draw and Cool. This school is quite small, and there is a single teacher, on Gendo island, off the north-western coast of Myoshima.

**Minami no Kobudo** Southern Myoshima has been the theater of several major battles, both during the Three Hundred Years war and during the Shikken wars. To defend themselves against Surabayang raiders, wandering undead, and bandits, the peasants of the southern regions developed a set of weapon skills to complement Nekotsume. Centuries after, the style is well developed, and includes Nunchaku, Jitte

and Bo, as well as thorough mental training (Bravery skill). Teachers are common, but their level can vary widely.

## 3.5 Myoshiman Equipment

This section introduces the equipment available to Myoshiman characters.

### 3.5.1 Weaponry

This section describes the most popular types of weapons in use in the Empire of Myoshima. For the sake of simplicity, most weapons have been mapped to existing weapon masteries, with small modifications when necessary. A more accurate coverage of oriental weapons can be found in *Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie*, v3.0, by Marco Dalmonte.<sup>7</sup>

Note that, due to the lack of ferrous minerals in Myoshima, the cost of iron and steel weapons is double the standard.

#### Missile Weapons

**Fukiya** The blowgun is a Ninja weapon – using poison is dishonorable for most other characters.

**Yumi, Daikyu** The Myoshiman longbow is different from its Mystaran equivalents, having an asymmetric shape that allows use from a kneeling position or from horseback (or tigerback, in most cases).

**Yumi, Hankyu** The Myoshiman halfbow is similar to Mystaran short bows.

#### Small weapons

**Gunbai** A type of war fan, the gunbai cannot be folded. It is generally used by officials as a defense weapons and a signalling tool.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>In Italian, see <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Dungeon/9940/armi.zip>

<sup>8</sup>See *Gunsen* in *Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie*

**Gunsen** A folding war fan, it is used by commoners as a defense weapon. It uses the same proficiency and statistics as the gunbai.<sup>9</sup>

**Kama** A simple agricultural tool, the Myoshiman sickle is built sticking a single-edged blade perpendicularly to a short wooden haft. It has the same statistics as dagger, but it cannot be thrown, can Skewer as trident, up to a maximum of one half the standard HD, and has Double Damage reduced by two mastery levels; the primary enemy target is M.

**Kunai** The kunai is a simple iron dagger, shaped like an agricultural tool used by gardeners; it is a Ninja weapon. It shares the same mastery as the standard dagger.

**Jitte/Sai** Blunt parrying daggers with one or two long, upcurving quillions, jitte and sai are popular with law enforcers; they share the same weapon mastery and have the statistics of a dagger, but use the short sword special abilities.

**Bo Shuriken** One of three types of ninja thrown weapon, these throwing spike have the same statistics as darts, and use the same mastery.<sup>10</sup>

**Ko-shaken** Small shuriken, star- or disc-shaped, the ko-shaken use chakram statistics, but the damage rate is reduced by one die size. However, ko-shaken are easily hidden, and can be constructed from bronze coins or other simple metallic objects.

**Ou-shaken** Large shuriken, star- or disc-shaped, the ou-shaken use the chakram statistics, and share the same mastery.

**Tanto** A typical stabbing dagger, the tanto is used by samurai and other characters as a personal defense weapon in close quarters. It is identical to the standard dagger (and uses the same mastery), but is not balanced for throwing.

**War Claws** The native weapon of the Rakasta is still commonly used in Myoshima.

<sup>9</sup>See *Gunsen* in *Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie*

<sup>10</sup>See <http://pandius.com/biaoshi.html>

## Chain and Flail weapons

**Kusarigama** One of many chain weapons, mostly used by Ninja and a few Kensei, the kusarigama is obtained by attaching a length of light chain to a kama. It uses the same mastery and has identical statistics to the Sindhi bullroarer knife.

**Manriki-gusari** A chain with weight at both ends, the manriki-gusari is a Ninja weapon. It uses the same statistics as the whip, but does twice as much damage, and has primary target A.

**Nunchaku** Derived from the thrashing flail, the Myoshiman two-section staff is similar to the Mystaran flail, but is composed of two identical wooden rods connected by a length of rope. It uses the statistics of a club, but can disarm as well.

**Surujin** A variant of the manriki-gusari, the weighed rope can be used as a bola, and requires the same mastery; however, it can also be used in melee combat. In both cases, it uses the same statistics as the bola (in melee, it cannot be used to strangle, though).

**Kawanaga** The Myoshiman shinobi use the grappling hook as a weapon. It works like a whip, but is a two handed weapon, and can Strangle the opponent, starting at Expert level.

**Sanbon nunchaku** The three section staff is a variant of the nunchaku that is used two handed. It uses the statistics of a staff, but, like the nunchaku, it can disarm as well.

## Pole Weapons

**Bisento** An ancient type of polearm, popular during the Three Hundred Years war, the bisento has a massive slashing blade. It works just like a voulge.

**Kamayari** A spear with two kama blades attached to the sides of the spear head, it is used by firefighters and as an anti-cavalry weapon. It is identical to a Mystaran spetum.

**Nagamaki** The nagamaki is a polearm adapted for usage by cavalymen – it has a matara blade attached to a long handle (not as long as a spear or a standard polderam, though). It has similar statistics to a bill, but can be used one handed at one lower level of mastery.

**Naginata** The most common type of Myoshiman polearm, the naginata is often used by women and sohei, and also as an anti-cavalry weapon by elite infantry. It is similar in statistics to the Mystaran glaive.

**Sasumata** The sasumata, or mancatcher, is a weapon used to catch thieves or to unhorse and capture mounted opponents.<sup>11</sup>

**Sodegarami** The sleeve entangler, or sodegarami, is similar in concept to the mancatcher, and used for the same purposes.<sup>12</sup>

**Yari** The Myoshiman spear is identical to its Mystaran equivalent.

## Swords

**Chokuto** An ancient type of straight bladed sword, the chokuto is only built in modern times as a temple offering. Only truly ancient beings (such as undead warriors), or eccentric Shinkan, use this weapon, which is identical to a Mystaran longsword. However, several legendary swords are chokuto, so some high-level characters learn its use. The chokuto uses the same mastery and has the same statistics as a longsword.

**Matara** The matara is the primary weapon of the samurai. Designed mostly for two handed use, it is still almost as light as a standard longsword. It has the same statistics as a bastard sword, but the lighter construction allows the user to perform special maneuvers as if it was a longsword.

**Kodachi** The kodachi is a curved short sword, less refined than a mishiya. It has the same stats as a standard short sword.

**Ninjato** The ninjato is a kodachi blade mounted on a matara handle. This has the double effect of allowing effective disguise – the blade is sheathed in a matara scabbard, making it unrecognizable and leaving extra space to hide small objects – while letting the shinobi use a simpler, faster and less costly weapon. The weapon is otherwise identical to the kodachi.

**Nodachi** The largest Myoshiman sword, the nodachi (or zambato) is rarely employed. It is basically a two-handed sword with a one-edged blade. It comes in both curved and straight-bladed versions.

**Tachi** A less refined version of the matara, it does not have the same lightness or flexibility. Thus, its statistics are the same as the standard bastard sword.

**Chisamatara** A type of matara built for one-handed use only, the chisamatara has the same statistics as the Mystaran longsword (but does not use the same mastery). It is generally used by non-Samurai, who cannot carry both matara and mishiya, since it is an intermediate blade that is more versatile than either of the other two.

**Yamadachi** A large cutting blade with the head larger than the base, the yamadachi, known as parang elsewhere on Patera, is used by mountain barbarians and by the inhabitants of Surabayang and Malacayog.<sup>13</sup>

**Mishiya** The companion weapon to the matara, this weapon uses the same statistics as the Ochalean dao.<sup>14</sup>

## Clubs and Staves

**Bo** A standard staff, useful both as weapon and a walking aid.

**Furibo** A shorter staff, identical to the standard club.

<sup>11</sup>See *Mancatcher* in *Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie*

<sup>12</sup>See *Sodegarami* in *Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie*

<sup>13</sup>See *Machete* in *Manuale delle Armi e delle Maestrie*

<sup>14</sup>See <http://pandius.com/biaoshi.html>

**Otsuchi** A large wooden maul, used as a siege weapon, the otsuchi uses the poleaxe statistics, but it is a bludgeoning weapon, and has the battleaxe special maneuvers.

**Tetsubo** The iron-shod staff is a typical sohei weapon. It has the same statistics as a Mace, but it is a two-handed weapon, weighs twice as the standard mace, and allows the user to use the battleaxe special maneuvers.

**Tonfa** The tonfa is a martial arts weapon similar to a club, with a short handle perpendicular to the haft. It uses the same statistics as a Club, but the primary target is A, and at Basic mastery it provides a defense bonus of -1 against one opponent (of any type) per round.

#### Axes

**Fuetsu** A standard hand axe, mostly used as a tool, or by barbarian warriors.

**Masakari** A larger axe, usually constructed for combat purposes, and used mostly by sohei and yamabito. It is identical to the standard battle axe.

### 3.5.2 Armor

Metallic armor is uncommon at best in Myoshima, due to the hot, humid weather and the lack of ferrous minerals. Armor crafted fully of iron or steel costs at least five times the standard. Moreover, iron armor tends to corrode quickly unless protected with layers of lacquer. Finally, the Rakasta build does not lend itself to heavy armor (domestic Rakasta of all types cannot wear armor weighing over 40 lbs, or 400 cn).

Therefore, only the following armor types are commonly used in Myoshima:

**Ou-yoroi** The Myoshiman full armor is a type of banded mail armor. With respect to Mystaran banded mail, the bands are smaller, lacquered and linked with hardened leather. It gives AC 4, costs 250 gp, and has an encumbrance of 450 cn. However, several smaller parts of the armor can be removed (as in a field armor), obtaining AC 5, and an encumbrance of 400 cn. Like full

plate, this armor requires help to get into. Note that the Ou-yoroi is too heavy for most purposes, and Rakasta warriors generally use it only for ceremonial purposes, wearing the field version in battle. Some Samurai, especially those of the Domestic breed, prefer even lighter armor such as the Do-maru, especially when fighting on foot.

**Do-maru** Do-maru is a lighter metal armor, similar to scale mail, though the construction is more complex. It gives AC 6, for cost of 150 gp and an encumbrance of 300 cn. Do-maru can also be crafted using hard leather scales instead of metal scales. This lowers AC to 7, cost to 30 gp and encumbrance to 150 cn.

**Tankou** An antiquated type of armor, composed of small metal plaques embedded in a hard leather corselet, with shoulder and arm guards and a leather and metal skirt. It gives AC 6, for a cost of 180 gp and an encumbrance of 350 cn. While it is rarely crafted in modern times, many older suits are passed down as family heirlooms, especially in Samurai families whose ancestors fought in the Three Hundred Years war.

**Kusari Katabira** A standard chain mail, rarely used due to its high cost (250 cp).

**Ashigaru armor** Foot soldiers are often equipped with a brigandine breastplate, much like the Tankou (but lighter and more flexible), over padded cloth. This gives AC 7, for a cost of 100 gp and an encumbrance of 200 cn.

**Padded armor** Padded cloth is used when no better protection is available. It gives AC 8, for a cost of 5 gp and an encumbrance of 100 cn.

Shields are almost never used, since a Rakasta's natural attacks are performed with both hands. Also, many warriors use two-handed weapons, or wield two one handed weapons at the same time.



## Chapter 4

# A Tour of Myoshima

### 4.1 Government and Administration

This section outlines the political structure of the Empire of Myoshima, starting from the imperial court and moving down to the local administration.

#### 4.1.1 The Imperial Court

The Imperial Court is the center of Myoshiman political life. Formally, all laws and edicts are direct expressions of the Emperor's will, though obviously the Emperor could never manage to personally oversee all the details. Such details, which may be quite important, are filled out by the civilian administration (*Daijo Daikan*). Moreover, the application of the imperial edicts and laws would be impossible without the feudal lords and the local administration.

Still, the court maintains a key role in government, since the Emperor personally appoints the major officers of the civilian administration. In addition to the imperial family, the court has a large number of officers that handle the details of protocol and ceremonies, as well as communication between the Emperor, the civilian administration and the daimyo.

Included in the Imperial Court are also two important institutions: the Imperial Guard, a large samurai army, traditionally commanded by one of the princes; and the Committee for Spiritual Affairs, a council of Shinkan priests who oversee the workings of the Kami-do shrines, with specific authority over the maintenance and staff of the shrines of the di-

vinized ancestors of the Emperor (Kitahara Hirameki and Kitahara Jiro).

#### 4.1.2 Civilian Administration and Court Nobility

The civilian administration, or *Daijo Daikan*, has the duty of proposing (i.e., drafting) laws and edicts, advising the Emperor, collecting taxes, managing the Empire's resources, and enforcing the laws.

To this end, the administration is structured into eight ministries:

**Ministry of Magic** This bureau oversees magic research, construction of magical items, and regulates as much as possible the activities of magic users – though it is not especially efficient in this respect. Most magic users in service of the Emperor receive posts in this ministry.

**Ministry of Taxation** This ministry handles the calculation and collection of taxes from the imperial holdings and the provincial daimyo.

**Ministry of the Civil Service** This bureau is in charge of maintaining the efficiency of the administration itself. It oversees the selection of new members of the civil administration and the wages and housing of the staff.

**Ministry of Ceremonies** This ministry oversees the civil and religious ceremonies held in Mara, in cooperation with the Committee for Spiritual Affairs.

**Ministry of the Military** This important ministry controls the ashigaru forces that guard the capitol and the other imperial holdings. It is generally headed by one of the princes, or another member of the Kitahara clan.

**Ministry of the Treasury** This bureau handles the management of the imperial treasury, and defines the destination of the taxation revenues.

**Ministry of Justice** This ministry manages the law enforcement. While it has only limited police personnel, and can therefore act only in the imperial territories, it employs permanent envoys and travelling inspectors to keep tabs on the management of justice in the provinces.

**Ministry of the Imperial Household** This ministry manages the day to day activities of the court.

Each ministry is headed by a *daigyo*, or chief administrator. The first four daigyo report to the major controller of the left (*sadaiben*), while the last report to the major controller of the right (*udaiben*). The controllers in turn report to the great ministers, the *sadaijin* and *udaijin*. This way, a number of cross-controls are possible, reducing to some extent the level of corruption, or at least its damages.

The ministers of the left and the minister of the right, together with the minister of the center (*nadaijin*, handles communication with the court), report to the chancellor (*daijo daijin*), usually the crown prince or another close relative of the Emperor, who is the head of the government and the chief advisor of the Emperor. These four officers, together with four major counsellors (*dainagon*), form the council of state.

Legions of middle-level and low-level administrators, counsellors, controllers and clerks (generally known as *bugyo*, officers) handles the clerical tasks of the administration.

### Court Nobility

While originally Hirameki and his successor Ieyasu had selected their administrator on criteria of skill, during the centuries of isolation, the most powerful

clans of administrators and ministers have achieved some degree of dynastic privileges over the civil administration positions. While no position, especially the highest ones, is passed on from father to son, sons of high ranking ministers automatically receive at least medium-level positions within the administration, while no one lacking the appropriate connections is ever proposed for appointments to a major position.

This custom has led to the formation of a court nobility, similar in structure to the feudal aristocracy. Court nobles are members of the samurai caste, though they are often warriors of modest or even no skills themselves. The entire upper tier of the administration is composed exclusively of members of the imperial family, or of one of four families, all related to the Kitahara clan: the Akiyoda, Nekoyama, Kitawara and Myobu (the Kitawara replaced the Kakureshi after the defeat of the Shikken). Only rarely, when the Emperor is especially weak, powerful daimyo are able to obtain positions in the administration, and even then only as *dainagon*. Lesser clans fill positions within the ministries, and are generally allied with one of the more powerful court nobles.

The court nobility is currently more or less allied with the Emperor, though factions and feuds are still rampant, especially between the Nekoyama and Kitawara clans.

The current members of the Council of State are listed in Table 4.1.

### Imperial Agents

In addition to the standard administrative structure, the Emperor may select special counsellor (*geki*) that answer directly to him. Geki are often spies, powerful magic users or priests, or experts on specific issues that the emperor wants solved. Envoys to foreign nations also fall in this category, since, after centuries of isolation, Myoshima has no organized diplomacy.

### Ranking of Court Positions

Court position follow a rigid hierarchy, much more complex than the feudal aristocracy. The Chancellor is at the top of the hierarchy, followed by the Min-

ister of the Left. Third comes the Minister of the Right, followed by the Minister of the Center. Of equal level, and immediately under the Minister of the Center are the four Major counsellors, followed by the Geki, and finally by the Chief Administrators. Below these last officers, there are twelve more levels of administrators, controllers and counsellors (these are identified by decreasing numbers, e.g., “counsellor of the 1st rank of the Ministry of Magic” or “Administrator of the 4th rank of the Ministry of Treasury”), each signifying a reduction in status and responsibility of the bureaucrat. Ranks 1st to 6th are collectively known as middle-levels (*chuujin*, *chuuben* and *chuunagon*), while the lowest ranks are known as low-levels (*shojin*, *shoben* and *shonagon*). Administrators are in charge of performing specific tasks related to the working of their ministry, while controllers write reports on the work of administrators and counsellors, and these last study and propose new laws and edicts, based on the analysis of current practices – for example, in the Ministry of Taxation, an administrator would collect and register the arrival of tax revenues, a counsellor might propose variation in the taxation levels for specific products or regions, while a controller would review the accounts held by the administrator and the proposals drafted by the counsellor, and forward a report of everything to the upper level.

Table 4.1: Components of the Myoshiman Council of State

Daijo Daijin	Kitahara Myosuke (crown prince)
Sadaijin	Nekoyama Harutomi
Udaijin	Kitawara Morikaze
Nadaijin	Myobu Mitsuhide
Dainagon	Kitahara Kojiro (cousin of the emperor) Akiyoda Nekohide Myobu Mitsuhiko Kitahara Myomichi (prince, emperor’s younger brother)

### 4.1.3 The Feudal Hierarchy

Outside the capitol city, Mara, the power of the Imperial Court fades considerably. While the Imperial Guard is larger than any house army, it is tied up protecting the Emperor and his family, so military matters in the provinces are actually handled by the feudal lords (daimyo) and their vassals.

Daimyo have dynastic rights over their lands, and in turn assign portions of it to their vassals (shugo). The shugo assign smaller land parcels to individual samurai (jito). This way, each major village within a given fief has its own noble overseer, who, just like Mystaran nobles, collects taxes and in turn pays a salt tax to his lord.

### 4.1.4 Local Administration

There are two main types of local administration: in the major towns, especially Mara, but also the provincial capitols and the imperial towns, low-level bureaucrats, either members of the daijo daikon or of the daiymo households, act as mayors, usually overseeing single districts; in the villages, the heads of the major farming and fishing families act as a village council that directs day to day activities (such as repairing collective properties or establishing local regulations on farming matters), and answer directly to the local jito (who usually cares little about those matters). In the towns, these administrators are paid by the central government (provincial or national), and are also in charge of reporting data for the census, and helping the tax collector. In the villages, these positions are not paid, and enjoy only limited recognition.

The local administration has no police or judiciary power – these functions are delegated to the jito in villages, or to the agents of the daimyo in the provincial capitols. In Mara, the local administration is supposed to handle civil law and act as police force, but is severely understaffed, and the order is actually kept by the city guard (in case of major disturbances) or by the local Yakuza gangs. In several district of the sprawling capitol of Myoshima, the Yakuza have been able to obtain recognition from the local authorities, or even from the Ministry of Justice, and act as

a semi-official police force.

#### 4.1.5 Political Factions

While formally the policies of Myoshima are directly dictated by the Emperor, powerful daimyo exert much power in their home provinces, and court nobles are the actual people who design and enact the imperial edicts, and have much influence over the interpretation of those edicts.

Consequently, an hidden (and sometimes even overt) power struggle is fought between political factions aligned with the major forces.

##### **The Kitahara faction**

Obviously, one faction is the imperial family, together with its allies. The Emperor has several loyal families, including the Great Houses of Nueteki and Hanejishi, some lesser daimyo families, and several court nobility clans. The clergy also supports this faction more frequently than the others.

These families have been the driving forces behind the Renovation movement of the ninth century AC. However, these forces are not equal to those of the other two main forces, so the Emperor and his allies must play the other factions against each other to achieve their goals.

##### **The Katayama faction**

The Katayama family holds the position of Shogun (supreme commander of the armed forces) since 995 AC. It was part of the Renovation (Shinsei) movement against the old Ashai Regents, but has since moved to form its own faction, subtly gathering allies and power to oust the Emperor from actual rule, and uses an overtly expansionist stance to keep the position of Shogun from being deactivated.

The Katayama also have the support of several powerful daimyo Houses, including the Houses of Do, Kojima, and Tomitsu, and the Great House of Ryuuko. Moreover, the Katayama faction is popular with warriors and the lesser Samurai, as they promise a campaign of conquest – they have been also courting the Nueteki with the promise of support against

Selimpore, but in this case they have not been successful yet. On the other hand, this faction enjoys little support from the priesthood, due to its focus on material concerns.

##### **The Ashai faction**

The Ashai have held the positions of Regents (Sessho) and, when active, Shogun for the last two centuries, thanks to a careful policy of arranged marriages into the imperial family. Their power has been steadily decreasing in time, until in 995 AC the power struggle with the pro-imperial faction exploded in the Ashai rebellion, and the Ashai leader, daimyo Kamaggi, was deprived of his rank.

Nowadays, the title of daimyo has been passed to a lesser branch of the family that did not openly join the rebellion. The Miyashika, Taikoku and Tokanawa families still cling to the Ashai faction, waiting for a faux pas of the ruling Katayama clan to overthrow them.

The Ashai faction is a conservative group that campaigns for the return of the Time of Retreat.

##### **Neutrals and independents**

The Houses of Shishikugi, Youseihito and Sennyō are held to be neutral in the current power struggle. Shishikugi consider itself a faction in its own right, and holds the loyalty of some lesser lords in the south. Youseihito and Sennyō have only small land claims, and keep to a strict neutrality while selling their magical services to the best offer.

Secretly, both House Sennyō and House Tokanawa are controlled by the Shikken, Kakureshi Kuromaru (see Section 2.2.9).

#### 4.1.6 The Imperial Army

Like most nations, Myoshima adopts a combination of professional army and levied troops. The structure of the Myoshiman army mirrors the feudal society of the Empire: each of the noble clans that rule the various provinces of the Empire provides a division, composed of both cavalry and infantry. In turn,

each vassal of the provincial daimyo gathers a company composed of his own samurai vassals, as well as common soldiers. In wartime, each *jito* is in charge of providing additional foot soldiers drawn from the commoner families that live in his lands.

### Structure of the Army

Since the strength of a clan army is based on the census of the province ruled by that clan, divisions tend to vary in size and composition. In general, a clan that rules a large province (ca. 100,000 inhabitants) can gather 1,000 samurai, including both the *jito* and the house retainers who make up the permanent forces of the clan, and a like number of ashigaru (mercenary foot soldiers, mostly spearmen or archers), who serve as guards in the provincial capitol, in the clan fortresses and in the houses of the major vassals (the *shugo*). In wartime, each *jito* can, on average, bring five more militiamen, and further troops can be levied from the towns.

In addition to the clan armies, the Emperor maintains a permanent army of 6,000 samurai (the Imperial Guard or *Shitsu-Kingo*), drawn from the cadet branches of noble families, and 6,000 ashigaru are employed as guards in the imperial towns, in the capitol, or in the imperial palaces. An army of 6,000 *sohei* can also be gathered from the temples.

Overall, the Empire of Myoshima can field 30,000 samurai, 30,000 ashigaru, and 6,000 *sohei*, plus 138,000 militiamen in wartime. Due to the structure of the army, though, it is quite slow to gather – each division needs to wait for all nobles of its home province to be warned of the call to arms. The presence of the imperial guard and the house guards of the daimyo, offset at least part of this problem, giving Myoshima a smaller but quicker force to deal with emergencies.

### Equipment

The samurai of Myoshima use a standard set of weapons: two paired one edged swords, the longer *matara* and the shorter *mishiya*, and a long bow, the *daikyu*. They usually wear laced armor, composed of many matching parts (full armor, AC 4; field armor,

AC 5) and roughly having the same encumbrance as *Mystaran* banded mail, but use no shields. Samurai ride sabretooth tigers, usually equipped with collars of flying.

The ashigaru do not have such strict standards, though they usually wear padded or leather armor (AC 7) and are armed with bows, spears, polearms and daggers. More experienced ashigaru – such as officers or mercenaries – wear brigandine (AC 6), and may wield other weapons, especially polearms and swords.

*Sohei* tend to use the heavier armor available (laced armor, lamellar armor or chain mail worn under a breastplate), and are known to use *naginata* (a type of polearm), *tetsubo* and battle axe as their primary weapons.

Militiamen are armed with whatever they can find, usually spears or forks, and wear padded armor at best.

### Sample House Army

Here we present a sample army division, suitable to represent the forces fielded by a major noble house.

#### Command staff

- Commander: Daimyo or a senior Samurai delegated to command the army (Rakasta F12).
- Deputy Commander: senior Samurai (Rakasta F9).
- Infantry Commander: Ashigaru captain (Rakasta F8).
- Heroes and specialists (high level members or allies of the clan): Rakasta *Shinkan* or *Wu Jen* 5-10 (5), Rakasta *Ninja* or *Kensei* 5-10 (5).

#### Vassal banner (40)

- 1 *Shugo* (Rakasta F7)
- 20 *Jito* Samurai (Rakasta F3)
- 10 Ashigaru (Rakasta F1)

### House guard banner (5)

- 1 Senior Samurai (Rakasta F5)
- 40 House Samurai (Rakasta F2)

### Infantry banner (10)

- 1 Guard captain (Rakasta F4)
- 60 Ashigaru (Rakasta F1)

In addition to the fighting personnel, this division includes 107 non-fighting Rakasta (normal monster level), including servants, provisioners, field medic, armorers and weaponsmiths, for a grand total of 1175.

## 4.2 Geography

This section describes the geographic and economic features of the Empire of Myoshima.

### 4.2.1 Climate and Landscape

The empire of Myoshima controls a large archipelago off the coast of Rajahstan. The largest island, Myoshima, hosts the imperial capitol, Mara, as well as most major towns. Mara lies slightly to the north of the Myoshiman equator.

Six other major islands, and many smaller ones, complete the archipelago. The six major island, in decreasing order of surface, are:

**Kitashima** Directly north of Mara, this large island is divided into five provinces. Once the uncontested domain of the Kurohyou clan, political dominance in this island is now contested between the Kojima and Tokanawa families.

**Gyuuhishima** Originally the holding of the Great House of Hanejishi, this island is notorious for being infested with ox-headed demons – no matter how much effort daiymo Hanejishi and the other two provincial rulers put into getting rid of the nuisance, in a generation or so another wave of demons erupts from the jungles. The town of Oushima (which is also the original name of the island) is the major settlement.

**Nanseito** Formerly part of the holdings of the Nueteki clan, this island broke off during the Three Hundred Years war. It is now divided into two lightly populated provinces.

**Higashima** Like Sendo Honjima, this island was part of the Sennyu holdings, but a local shugo turned coat on his lord and sided with house Ryuuko, only to shift allegiance to house Kitahara by the end of the war. His descendants are of a similar mold, shifting allegiances to the strongest contendat, so the inhabitants of Higashima are considered a somewhat untrustworthy by the average Myoshiman.

**Sendo Honjima** The only island that never saw an invasion, Sendo Honjima was once part of the larger kingdom of the Great House of Sennyu. Nowadays, the Sennyu clan controls only this lightly populated island, which has been their fief since the formation of the empire.

**Higashi Youseido** Another island ruled by a single daiymo, this was originally part of the Yousei-hito holdings. Yousei-hito was one of the first houses to collapse, losing more than two thirds of its territories to Hirameki and his allies. The governors of Eastern Youseido, the Uchida, are held to be one of the five most loyal families, the others being Nueteki, Hanejishi, Nekotakai and the Kitahara themselves.

Since the Pateran seas are freshwater, there is no lack of water for irrigation and other uses even on the smallest islands. The coastal areas of Myoshima are therefore verdant and densely populated. On the other hand, there is a general lack of salt, which must be extracted from deep mines, and is five times as costly as on Mystara.

Further inland, the abundant rains support the dense jungles and bamboo forests that cover the better part of Myoshima. A mountain chain, culminating in Mount Tiger (Torayama), divides Myoshima in two halves.

### 4.2.2 Economy

The Empire of Myoshima is managed according to the feudal model – taxation is collected at village level by the local vassals, and shares equivalent to the standard salt tax are due to each vassal’s liege. Taxation is performed directly by the civilian administration, or via professional tax collecting firms (often fronts for the local yakuza kumi) in the Imperial Domain only. Therefore, most of the imperial treasury income comes directly from the Imperial Domain, as less than 1% of the collected taxes from the provincial areas arrives to the treasury.

#### Mineral resources

Most of the rock in Myoshima is of volcanic origin. Myoshimans rarely use rock in construction, preferring wood, but extract ornamental stones of various types.

Ferrous minerals are less common on Patera than on Mystara, especially in the Empire of Myoshima. There is a small local production, but more is traded from Rajahstani city states in exchange for gold. Thus, objects crafted of iron alloys are much more costly than usual.

On the other hand, Patera is as rich in silver and gold as Mystara, so the value of those metals is unchanged.

#### Currency

The Empire of Myoshima mints coins on a national basis, but local governors sometimes also mint their own coins, and most of them use paper currency to handle large payments (over 5 gp). Table 4.2 shows the primary currency types. In addition to those, locally minted silver coins, in the Shu, Bu and Ryo denominations (worth 1 cp, 5 cp and 1 sp respectively) are also common in the southern provinces, where more silver is mined than gold. These coins from the southern provinces are also in use in the imperial cities of Minato and Kamakura, and less commonly in Mara.

### 4.2.3 The Provinces of Myoshima

Myoshima is divided into 13 mayor provinces (averaging 100.000 inhabitants each) and 22 less densely populate provinces (averaging 50.000 inhabitants each). Circa 600.000 Myoshimans live in the city of Mara, or in the rest of the imperial territories.

Each province extends over 2,000 to 3,000 sq. miles, though less important provinces can be half as much, and landlocked provinces can be larger. Southwestern and northeastern provinces are generally smaller, but more densely populated, than southeastern and central provinces.

Table 4.3 reports the thirteen major provinces (plus the imperial domain) with their ruling clans, current faction allegiance, and capitol.

#### Imperial Domain

The imperial domain is composed of the metropolis of Mara, capitol of the empire, and the surrounding farmlands up to the city of Byakko. These lands, in the central part of Myoshima, form the core of the imperial strength, and are surrounded by smaller provinces with loyalties split about equally between the imperial family and the powerful daiymo of Ichiyoda, who has been the Shogun for the last five years.

Moreover, the emperor and the civilian administration control the towns of Kamakura, siege of the homonymous shogunate centuries ago, and the modern port town of Minato, the base of the Myoshiman fleet, both on the southern coast.

#### Ashaido

A vast northern province, Ashaido has a slightly colder climate than most, due to the proximity of high mountains. It is rich in bamboo wood and has good farmland.

The ruling clan, the Ashai, reached its peak of power in the IX century, when it was able to secure Sessho and Shogun positions under several weaker Emperors. Today, the Ashai faction is in disarray, and part of the population of this province has left for an unknown destination.

Table 4.2: Imperial currency standards

Denomination	Metal	Weight	Value	Shape
Mon	Copper	0.1 cn	0.1 cp	Round, with a square hole
Hiki	Copper	1 cn	1 cp	Round, with a square hole
Momme	Silver	0.1 cn	1 cp	Generally unminted or oval
Shu	Gold	0.1 cn	1 sp	Round, with a square hole
Bu	Gold	0.5 cn	5 sp	Round, with a square hole
Ryo	Gold	1 cn	1 gp	Round, with a square hole
Koban	Gold	2 cn	2 gp	Oval
Oban	Gold	10 cn	10 gp	Oval
Koku	Rice	3000 cn	200 gp	Koku is a measure of volume, applied to rice to give a currency unit

Table 4.3: Mayor provinces of Myoshima

Ruling clan	Allegiance	Province	Capitol
Kitahara	Imperial	Imperial Domain	Mara
Ashai	Ashai	Ashaido	Kamato
Ryuuko	Katayama	Seiryoudo	Seishi
Tokenawa	Ashai	Hyouga	Tokazaki
Tomitsu	Katayama	Senmori	Shinsento
Do	Katayama	Torayama	Doshuku
Kojima	Katayama	Nyashima	Komachi
Hanejishi	Imperial	Oushido	Ouhama
Nekotakai	Imperial	Nishi Youdaido	Myojoshi
Nueteki	Imperial	Nueteki	Nueteki
Katayama	Katayama	Ichiyoda	Sanada
Miyashika	Ashai	Shikamori	Morishi
Shishikugi	Neutral	Shishikudo	Nakigoe
Taikoku	Ashai	Kaitohama	Kaijo



## Seiryoudo

The ancestral fief of the Ryuuko Great House, Seiryoudo lies between the sea and the last peaks of the great mountain chain that divides Myoshima. A rough, dangerous land, Seiryoudo inhabitants rely heavily on hunting and fishing for their economy. The homeland of many great warriors, Seiryoudo is also rumored to host the lair of an ancient blue dragon, a wyrm that rules over all dragons of northern Myoshima.

The provincial capitol, Seishi, hosts a famous festival of Kaikiryuu, where teams of male Rakasta of different clans run through the city carrying massive palanquins with statues of the draconic god.

## Hyouga

The province of Hyouga is one of the most populated on the northern island of Kitashima. Its inhabitants are well known for their skill in woodcarving, which is the primary driver of the Hyouga economy.

Tokazaki, the provincial capitol, is the cultural center of Kitashima, with its appreciated puppet shows, the *bunraku*. The local Kabukimono are often puppeteers, and puppet shows are held during religious festivals as well (though only those of Kami-do, as Shimaja frown on such shows).

## Senmori

An heavily forested province, Senmori was originally part of the Sennyo house holdings, but is currently held by daimyo of the Tomitsu family, allied to the Katayama. The province is not especially rich, except in wood and game, and it is rumored to host the court of the Four Fairy Brothers, rulers of the Myoshiman fairies.

The provincial capitol, Shinsento, is known mostly for the quality of the paper produced there, as well as for its magic users' guild, the Hakkoukai (White Rainbow Society).

## Torayama

A minerary province in northern Myoshima, Torayama takes its name from the highest peak of

the region, Mount Tiger. Some of the few Myoshiman iron and gold mines are located in this province. The large revenues of the mines help pay for the Do family's devotion to Shima-do – during the centuries, the daimyo have had one thousand gold-plated statues of Shima sculpted and positioned into the great temple in Doshuku.

In this province, Shima-do is more popular than Kami-do.

## Nyashima

Crossed by the largest river in Kitashima, the province of Nyashima is named for the original capitol of the Kurohyou reign, which was built on a large island in the middle of the Nyagawa (Nya river). The old capitol now lies in ruins, and the Kojima family, which was promoted to rule the area including the Nyashima after the establishment of the empire, chose to build a new city, Komachi, rather than restore the old one.

The province is known for its Komachi-niku (Komachi meat), giant mouse meat that is considered the most flavorful, tender and rich in all of the empire. The farmers of Nyashima keep their mouse-raising methods strictly secret, much to the chagrin of their neighbours in Hyouga, who have been trying everything, from hiring ninja to steal the secrets to branding their own meat "Komachi-style", to beat them.

## Oushido

Covering the northern half of Gyuuhishima, the province of Oushido is somewhat marginal to Myoshiman politics. Scions of House Hanejishi are generally just, if strict, rulers, and the province's natural resources, fisheries and cattle farms, adequately cover the needs of the inhabitants.

Oushima, the provincial capitol, is a tranquil town noted only for its colorful kite fighting festivals – kite flying and construction being the favorite hobby of the locals. There are two festivals, one on Ikutsuin's day, and the other on the major ceremony honoring Kaikiryuu.

## **Nishi Youdaido**

In ancient times, this province was the north-western part of the Youseihito holdings – nowadays limited to the region south of Nishi Youdaido, called Moto Youdaido. Nishi Youdaido was held by daiymo Hirameki, and passed down to the Emperor's son-in-law, who in turn passed it to his son-in-law, Nekotakai Myojo's father. The Nekotakai family has held this fief up to the present day, and they are strong imperial supporters. The provincial capitol, Myojoshi, was moved to a more defensible position after the Shotohai Uprising, and took the current name from Nekotakai Myojo, the most prominent hero of the province.

Nishi Youdaido is rich in minerals, especially ornamental stones. A life-size jade statue of Nekotakai Myojo can be seen in the hero's shrine in Myojoshi.

## **Nueteki**

One of the most stable domains in all of Myoshima, Nueteki was founded by the family of the same name, which still holds it. In this province, female Rakasta have more weight than in most of Myoshima. Nueteki noblewomen often take the path of the shrine maiden, wu jen or other adventuring careers, and the clan is often led by a matron – starting with the foundation of the Empire, Nueteki has had more female daimyo than all the other major provinces together. Castle Nueteki, the clan stronghold, is guarded by a contingent of female naginata-wielding Kensei.

Nueteki is also the major cultural center of southern Myoshima, with a great library and well-known kabuki theaters.

## **Ichiyoda**

A modern, economically growing province, Ichiyoda is ruled by the current Shogun, lord Katayama. The Shogun's father was the first lord to open relations with foreign nations, and the provincial capitol, Sanada, has grown into a thriving trade hub during the last century, being the favorite stop of Rajahstani and Selimporese merchant junks.

Ichiyoda benefits of large rice fields and salt mines that make it the richest province in southern

Myoshima.

## **Shikamori**

"The forest of deers" holds up to its name, being mostly covered in woods of various types, which are indeed rich in game. A conservative province, Shikamori is home to a reserved, severe people who see themselves as the epitome of the Myoshiman samurai. Morishi, the provincial capitol, is heavily guarded by the ashigaru of House Miyashika, and is dominated by the vast fortress of the daiymo, a supported of the old Ashai Shoguns – rumors have it that the daiymo is strengthening his army, looking for the right opportunity to strike at the current Shogun's province, neighbouring Ichiyoda.

Morishi is also known as the home of the most respected school of the tea ceremony, an ancient custom that is popular everywhere in the empire.

## **Shishikudo**

The westernmost province of Myoshima, and one of the most directly exposed to raiders from Surabayang, Shishikudo has developed a famed warrior tradition. The province is ruled by the Shishikugi clan, who conquered it in prehistoric times from the original Pachydermion inhabitants – the field of great mounds raising just outside the capitol, Nakigoe, is said to be the tomb of an entire Pachydermion army slaughtered by the early Shishikugi.

## **Kaitohama**

A quiet pastoral region in southern Myoshima, Kaitohama was originally the siege of the Kaito house, who ruler from the castle of Kai (Kaijo). The castle, however, was overrun by the undead troops of the Shikken and the daiymo was slain with his entire family. The province was handed over to clan Taikoku, as Taikoku Tenjin, son of the family head and a famous general, had led the Shishikugi army in the battles of the Shikken war.

The descendants of Tenjin worked hard to restore the region, but distanced themselves from House Shishikugi, and in a bit to achieve the status of

strongest house in southern Myoshima, sided with the Ashai Shoguns. This turned against them, as in the end they were surrounded by enemies, and when less competent descendants took power, several of their shugo broke off and sided with the emperor. Thus nowadays Kaitohama is the smallest among the major provinces.

The provincial capitol, Kaijo, is built along a narrow bay, enclosed by forest-covered hills. It is known for its nice natural scenarios, and for the number and size of its hot springs.

## 4.3 Religions of Myoshima

This section describes the two major religions of the Empire of Myoshima, as well as their pantheons and priesthoods.

### 4.3.1 Kami-do

The ancestral religion of the Myoshimans revolve around the worship of ancestors, as well as of nature spirits and heavenly spirits (Immortals) that are often considered ancestors of the Rakasta, or of specific clans.

#### Beliefs

The followers of Kami-do believe that many spirits inhabit a world parallel to the material one. These entities include nature, animal and ancestor spirits, and can affect the lives of mortals by crossing into the material world, or by channelling power through a mortal. The believers strive to appease these spirits through offerings, and head the counsel of ancestor spirits as interpreted by the priests.

Cult practices vary widely from shrine to shrine, though the basic tenets mentioned above and the pantheon are always preserved. However, each group of priests may focus its worship on specific spirits, or hold the same ceremonies in different ways, based on the local traditions.

#### Pantheon

While most spirits revered by the Kami-do are just entities from the Spirit World, some of the most powerful spirits are actually Immortals who appear to the Rakasta of Myoshima as ancestor spirits.

**The Six Heavenly Spirits** The major spirits are so ancient that no account is left of their mortal life, if they had one. They embody great forces of nature such as the sea and the sun, or represent the ancestors of the entire Rakasta-kind. They are worshipped and highly respected by members of all social classes, and their holy days are marked by ceremonies and festivals.

**Ayatori** (Bastet, the cat's cradle), mother of the Rakasta;

**Kaikiryuu** (Ka, the wondrous dragon), father of the Rakasta;

**Ikutsuin** (Ixion), the sun, ancestor of the Kitahara clan;

**Goshinka no Uchimonoshi** (Wayland, the volcano swordsmith), patron of earthquakes and volcanoes;

**Shio-Zuchi** (Protius, Old Man of the Tides), patron of the sea and fishercats;

**Tsuchigami** (Terra), patroness of farmers and agriculture.

**The Six Immortal Heroes** The six most important heroes are the ancestors spirits of the ruling houses and of other noble houses. In addition to these six, dozens of other (non-Immortal) great heroes are also worshipped, including the five younger brothers of Prince Kitahara Jiro and the ancestors of the other eight Great Houses (the progenitor of House Nueteki is the Immortal Ninfangle, but each Great House can trace its lineage to some semi-mythical hero).

In order of seniority, these are the Six Immortal Heroes:

**Byakko no Kata** (Kata Ng, Empyreal of Matter, LG, sponsored by Ka), Kata of the White Tiger, patron of healers and wisdom;

**Kyriogami** (Ninfangle, Empyreal of Matter, N, sponsored by Ka), in life Nueteki Fuuri, patron of adventurers and House Nueteki;

**Kitahara Hirameki** (Temporal of Energy, LN, sponsored by Ixion), patron of rulers and the House Kitahara;

**Nekotakai Myojo** (Temporal of Thought, LG, sponsored by Ganetra), patron of samurai and the Warrior Code (Bushido);

**Kitahara Jiro** (Initiate of Matter, LN, sponsored by Kata Ng), patron of those who cleanse their stained honor with ritual suicide;

**Daishou Sennin** (Guthbrand the Eternal General, Temporal of Matter, N, sponsored by Wayland), in life Abbot Shingen, patron of Sohei and warfare.

**Fujin and Rajin** The twin Immortals of thunder and lightning, Fujin (Bartziluth) and Rajin (Cretia) could not be more different – whereas Fujin is large, slow and musclebound, as well as a bit dim-witted, Rajin is slim, quick-handed and quick-witted. The two brothers have two aspects – on one hand, they are tricksters, heroes of many legends where they play heavy-handed (and sometimes outright cruel) pranks on figures of authority, from daimyo to more respected Kami; on the other, they embody uncontrollable forces of nature – the violent storms that rage on Myoshima and threaten the lives of farmers and fishercats.

**The Four Gods of Rain** The four gods of rain control the (usually abundant) rainfall in Myoshima, and thus receive much worship from the farmers. Each of these four Immortals is in charge of a single season: Calitha is in charge of spring rains, Gorm of summer rains, Hymir of autumn rains, and Odin of winter rains.

**The Twelve Craft Gods** These lesser spirits (actually, the Immortal known as the Twelve Watchers) oversee the major crafts, and are worshipped only by craftsmen – a lower caste in the Myoshiman society.

**The Merchant** The lone patron of merchants, entertainers and other social misfits (Asterius) receive no formal worship – merchants and Kabukimono, though, pray to him for protection.

**The Evil Ones** Ama-Tsu-Hiko (Masauwu) and Ama-Tsu-Hime (Talitha) are the patrons of thieves and evildoers. Their main activity is to tempt Rakasta into dishonorable acts, by means of the four vices (drinking, gambling, violence and leachery). They are not worshipped by the Shinkan, except those who are Chaotic and evil.

These Immortals are represented as twin, handsome brother and sister.

### Shinkan

The most common type of priest found in the Empire is the Shinkan. These shamans worship both Immortals and ancestor spirits, drawing power from both sources. The Shinkan usually live in temples, which range from small family shrines – in this case, the Shinkan lives in a nearby building with his family – to large temples in the cities – in this case Shinkan act more as public officers.

Priestesses, or shrine maidens, are also common, though they usually serve as assistants to the male priests in city temples. In the countryside, priests are rare enough that a shrine maiden may hold a temple on her own, and hierarchies are based more on true ability than on political power.

### Sohei

The temples of the Kami-do are often built in remote locations, where monsters and brigands can threaten the lives of the priests, or in the great cities, where the priesthood is involved in the politics of the Empire. Temple defenders, known as Sohei, are actively recruited, especially among the younger sons of the aristocracy, to protect the temples and the shamans,

who often have only a limited martial training. While most Sohei have only limited religious training, high ranking temple defenders always have both the training and powers of the priests.

The Sohei have been a long standing tradition in Myoshima, having originated from Mountain Rakasta hermits and warrior-priests (Yamabito), to be adopted by Kami-do shrines (mostly as a way to turn retired warriors into priest while allowing them to exploit their skills), though they ended up serving Great House interests during the Three Hundred Years war.

Practically extinct at the time of Kitahara Ieyasu, the Sohei were reformed by Shima-do priests who established new temples in regions that needed to be resettled or restored after the war – indeed, the Sohei name originated from Shima-do, as originally the Kami-do Sohei were known as Yamabito, a term that in modern times has taken the meaning of mountain barbarian.

In modern times, Sohei serve as temple guards, as well as a reserve army that can be quickly gathered to defend Myoshima.

## Souryo

The Kami-do also allows Rakasta who do not enjoy the ability to communicate with the spirits to join the priesthood. While most of these become Sohei, some prefer to live more cloistered lives, trying to hone their senses and awareness by means of physical exercise. These are the Souryo – mystics of the Kami-do who train in complex martial exercises of Rajahstani derivation. These mystics live in remote monasteries, guarded by Sohei and assisted by Shinkan priests for their spiritual needs.

### 4.3.2 Shima-do

The second most common faith in the Empire, Shima-do is based on teachings imported from Rajahstan and Kompore-Thap, and adapted to the Myoshiman culture.

## Beliefs

Followers of Shima-do recognize the existence and power of the spirits worshipped by the Kami-do. However, they follow the teachings of the Immortal Shima above those of the spirits, knowing that the spirits can often be selfish, single-minded, or driven by anger and other feelings that can cloud their judgement. On the other hand, the Immortal Shima is believed to have shed all imperfections of mortality, and have transcended to a different level of existence, turning back only to guide the other mortals along the same path he once followed.

Followers of Shima-do believe in reincarnation – people who were good in life are reincarnated in higher forms of life, such as Pachydermions or Rakasta, on the upper world (Patera), while those who chose the path of evil are reincarnated as Bakemono (goblinoids), and cast back into the lower world (Mystara). Shima-do teaches that there are five realms of existence: the Eight Hells (realms of the Entropic powers, and specifically of Hel), the Realm of Hungry Ghosts (Limbo), the Lower Mortal World (Mystara), the Upper Mortal World (Patera), and the Realm of Heavenly Being (Shima's realm). Sins and vices cause a soul to be reincarnated into a lower realm – greed and envy send sinners to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, while lesser sins cause reincarnation in the Lower Mortal World. Repeated sinful lives may cause a soul to descend into the Eight Hells, the realm of Shiryō no Kizaki (Hel, the Lady of Souls).

There are several sects of Shima-do. Each sect follows the basic beliefs of the Shima-do, but may add further interpretations, or practice specific rituals that are not common with other sects. Also, sects may have different political and social outlooks.

The main sects include the Orthodox Way of Pakan, which is mostly popular with the small Myoshiman Pachydermion communities and is characterized by a strict adherence to the teachings of the Kompore-Thap branch of the cult, including the use of the Pachydermion tongue in most rituals and the recitation of long prayers; the Enlightened Way, which is the most popular sect, and is the sect that originally took many ceremonies and beliefs from the Kami-do and added it to the Shima-do; and the Way

of the Clear Mind, a smaller sect that entirely refuses material wealth, to focus on meditation and enlightenment. The Orthodox Way of Pakan and the Way of the Clear Mind are much more exoteric than the Enlightened Way, which accounts for their relative lack of popularity. The Orthodox Way of Pakan, however, finds some appeal with the upper class Rakasta, who find its teaching more structured and rational.

### **Pantheon**

The Shima-do is basically a cult of the Immortal Ssuma, known as Shima in Myoshima, though it has adapted to the existing cult of the spirits by simply accepting the spirits as elements of its cosmology. Thus, the Shima-do shares the major elements of the cult of Ganetra as practiced by the Pachydermions of Kompur-Thap, but differs for details regarding the role of the lesser entities in the pantheon, who take heavily from Kami-do tradition.

### **Shimaja**

The Shimaja is a type of cloistered priest modeled along the lines of the Pachydermion priests. Shimaja live in large temples, supported by their own work and the offerings of the local communities. The Shimaja are powerful spellcasters, though their magic is usually geared toward healing and purification. Like all followers of Shima-do, they are bound to help those in need, which makes Shimaja monasteries popular refuges – unfortunately, there are only a handful of them, since there are far fewer Shimaja than other types of priests, possibly because Shima-do is less popular than Kami-do. Shimaja take vows of celibate, and abstain from alcoholic or otherwise intoxicating beverages and red meats.

### **Biku**

These followers of Shima take extreme vows of poverty – they only own what they can carry, and most limit themselves to a few clothes, a staff, a bag and some food. They learn martial arts of Rajahstani origin, just like the Souryo (actually, it was the followers of Shima who first brought advanced un-

armed combat styles to the Empire), but their training is more limited. On the other hand, Biku generally have some spellcasting powers granted by Shima. Contrary to the Souryou, Biku do not live in monasteries: they are wanderers, living off the charity of villagers. They feel bound to help those in need, which usually offsets the cost of feeding them for a while – especially if some threat, such as undead or demons, is at hand and no priests are available to help.

### **Sohei**

Like the Kami-do shrines, the temples of Shima are also protected by Sohei.

The Shima-do Sohei were first recruited by the Enlightened Way temples of southern Myoshima, to protect the temples from the depredations of power-hungry Okimi and Daimyo. The order's prestige was finally established under Abbot Katayama Shingen, when an army of Sohei was able to resist the Shikken's undead hordes long enough for the imperial army to arrive, thus saving the southern regions from certain destruction at the hands of the undead warriors.

Shima-do Sohei are similar to their Kami-do counterparts in most respects.

### **4.3.3 Other religions**

No other religion is officially present in the Empire, due to the isolationist and nationalist stance of the recent Emperors, who persecute clerics not aligned with the existing religions – Kami-do is considered the state religion, and Shima-do is tolerated though not very popular with the government.

The Church of Bellayne has been considering expansion into Myoshima since the Empire contacted the Bellaynese Rakasta, but has not been able to obtain an imperial authorization up to now.

Entropic cults do arise occasionally, either created by the Shikken, by Rakshasa, or by powerful Evil Spirits. These cults are usually small, limiting their operation to a single village or town, but can create a lot of trouble, since they usually have access to powerful magics only marginally understood by other Rakasta magic users and priests. They generally receive spells from Masauwu, Talitha, and Hel.

Entropic priests are called Kuroshi (f. Kuromiko), and have powers as ancestor spirit-guided Shinkan (usually Chaotic ones) or as specialist Clerics of Masauwu, Talitha or Hel.

## 4.4 The Province of Senbei

This section provides a more detailed description of a single province, Senbei. It can be used as the home base for a Myoshiman campaign, from the low to them medium levels.

### 4.4.1 Overview

Senbei is a smaller province in southern Myoshima, wedged between the larger Kaitohama to the east and Nueteki to the west.

Economic resources include rich rice fields and salt mines (salt is very costly in Myoshima, since the seas are freshwater and all salt must be mined).

Senbei has a population of ca. 42,000 Rakasta, including some 4,000 Mountain Rakasta. The provincial capitol, Junshu, has about 5,000 inhabitants, while the largest village is Chishi, with some 400 inhabitants.

### 4.4.2 The Ruling Family

The Inogashira clan rules this province. This clan came to power in Senbei well after the Shikken wars of the VI century AC. At that thime, the Inogashira were a lesser branch of House Kaito, which was destroyed by the Shikken's undead armies. The Inogashira ended up as vassals of the new rulers of Kaitohama province, the Taikoku clan.

From their jito position, they were able to raise to shugo rank, and then, under the weaker Emperors of the late VII century, to become independent lords, and to have their daimyo status officially recognized by Emperor Kohiko in 837 AC – actually a decision of the ruling Sessho, a member of the Katayama household trying to weaken the grip of the Ashai faction on the southern provinces.

Emperor Myotori, during the Renovation age, confirmed most of the smaller provinces that had been

created by his ancestors as a tool to weaken the greater feudal lords.

During the IX century, however, the Inogashira clan was forced to concentrate all its forces on defending its claim from the Taikoku family, who wished to restore their domain to its original borders. Senbei managed to remain independent thanks to some help from House Nueteki, whose leaders desired to weaken their most powerful neighbours, but was plagued by wako incursions, greedy shugo, brigands and the occasional undead rising from the old battlefields.

Daimyo Inogashira Kyosuke (Rakasta Samurai 11, LN) is the current head of the clan. Kyosuke's father was able to considerably strengthen his clan's position by throwing his lot with the Katayama clan, while securing his Nueteki alliance by marrying Kyosuke and his sister into that clan. Since the Katayama faction ousted the Ashai Shogun, Senbei has been free from direct threats from the Taikoku – though a couple assassination attempts, including one that killed Kyosuke's father, and at least one major wako raid can be traced back to that house.

The daimyo has three sons and two daughters, one of whom, Hitomi, shows (surprisingly, since Kyosuke's wife has only a faint trace of the Sphinx bloodline) a weak Sphinx bloodline. Nueteki matriarchs have been pestering Kyosuke to have Hitomi marry one of their own – it is a typical request, since the Great Houses try hard to keep the bloodlines within their families. However, Hitomi may be harder to handle than most Myoshiman girls, since she is developing magic skills (she's a second level Wu Jen), and Kyosuke is not even sure he wants to trade her off to Nueteki, when he could use her to a much greater profit for his clan – by marrying her into the Katayama clan.

The two elder sons, Sasuke (Samurai 3) and Utsuke (Samurai 1), are both trained, though not very experienced, warriors. Both are currently training as house retainers, but Kyosuke is considering the idea of sending Utsuke, the younger, to serve in the Imperial Guard.

A number of relatives of the daimyo, as well as members of four major vassal families, the Inomiji, Akineko, Choji and Narutake, hold the majority of the 18 shugo fiefs. The most powerful of them Ino-

gashira Kyotaro (Samurai 7, LE) is a second cousin of the daimyo. The remaining four fiefs are held by smaller families that have performed great services for the Inogashira clan in the past. Most of these vassals are more or less distantly related to the daimyo.

### 4.4.3 Shrines and Monasteries

The province of Senbei is also notable for being one of the few regions where Shima-do is more popular than Kami-do. This is due to two factors: first, the Inogashira themselves have Shima-do sympathies; second, there is a long tradition of great Shimaja abbots at the Red Leaf monastery, who have often strived to ease the suffering of the population when the daimyos were too busy with their clashes with the Taikoku clan.

The Red Leaf monastery was built at the foothills in northern Senbei, near the salt mines and the Yamabito territory. The monastery is led by a most holy Rakasta, Hoshin, whose fame reaches well beyond the borders of the province, and houses near a hundred Shimaja and Biku, as well as a strong garrison of 30 Sohei. While the Shimaja and Sohei rarely leave the monastery, the Biku travel through the province collecting donations and providing clerical services to the locals. The Red Leaf priests belong to the Enlightened Way sect.

Even though Shima-do has reached great diffusion in Senbei, Kami-do shrines dot the region, supported by more conservative branches of the Inogashira clan, as well as by the Inomiji and Narutake clans. The most respected shrines are the Tiger spirit shrine, the Shrine of the Endless Tides, and the Shrine of the Heji mountain spirit.

The Tiger spirit shrine is located in a forested area, and is quite distant from the major villages. It is home to a small group of shrine maidens devoted to the tiger spirits.

The Shrine of the Endless Tides focuses on the worship of the Heavenly Spirit Shio-Zuchi (Protius). It is located in the outskirts of Junshu, and is very popular with the local fishercats. The Shinkan here are often involved in fishing activities themselves, and the temple life is not very formal.

The Shrine of the Heji mountain spirit was built

in ancient times on the slopes of the Hejiyama, the highest mountaintop in the province – and home to a powerful nature spirit. It houses a small group of Souryo, as well as a large number of Shinkan and a Sohei force (about 20). It is supported by the aristocracy of the region, and is the primary choice for noblecats who wish to retire from mundane life. The head priest of the shrine is a member of the Inomiji clan, Torahide (Shinkan 8, LN).

In addition to these, a shrine dedicated to Emperor Hirameki is found in the provincial capitol. This shrine is manned by a group of twelve Sohei guards, while local Shinkan from the noble families share the leadership of the priesthood.

### 4.4.4 Martial Arts Schools

Senbei province is home to one of the most popular Nekotsume schools, Daikode Ryu. Three dojos of this art can be found, two in the provincial capitol, Junshu, and one in Chishi, a village held by shugo Inogashira Kyotaro.

None of them, unfortunately, is a true heir of the art – all are stuck at Expert level, and spend more time bickering among themselves than improving their skills.

Since the province has a higher concentration of followers of Shima than most, Shima no Daiken is also quite popular here, and there is even one Master level teacher available, at the monastery of the Red Leaf: Abbot Hoshin (Shimaja 16, LG) has reached Master level in Juuken, and is Skilled in the use of the Bo. An Expert Bo trainer is also available – Abbot Hoshin invited him to help improve his own skill.

The house Samurai of Inogashira clan are trained by a wizened old warrior, Hatake Tomotada (Kensei 10, Matara Master) in the use of the Matara, and by lesser weapon masters (Kensei of levels 6-8, Experts in their favored weapon) in the use of the Mishiya and Daikyu. An Ashigaru captain, Fusatomi (Ashigaru 7, Spear Expert) trains the town guard of Junshu in the use of the Yari (spear). Naginata trainers of Expert level can be found in both Sohei groups.

A better Daikyu trainer is also available, at the remote Shrine of the Tiger Spirit: the local shrine maiden, Yone (Shinkan 12, Tiger spirit guide, Daikyu



Master, NG), has recently reached the full mastery of the great bow, after years of meditation.

Finally, two wandering masters can be found – one of them, an old Kabukimono and former adventurer, Kai'shi (Bard 14, Jitte and Nunchaku Expert), is an expert in Minami no Kobudo. The other, a young, recently graduated Master of the Kusarigama, Ouyama Shirou (Kensei 9, Kusarigama Master), is looking for challenging opponents to help establish his reputation as a martial arts master, and then open his own dojo.

It is possible to find people with lower levels of mastery (Skilled and Basic) in most weapons, but for higher level training, or very uncommon weapons, the province has little to offer.

#### 4.4.5 Notables Locales

This section describes miscellaneous locales of the Senbei province beyond those covered in the previous

##### Shiudama

This Mountain Rakasta village is led by a warrior chief, Hayi (Yamabito 7), advised by a shaman, Anbgayi (Shinkan 6). There are about 80 Mountain Rakasta in the village, including 15 warriors. Shiudama is built on traditional Mountain Rakasta territory, but it is also near to the Horisageru salt mines. The mountain barbarians have seen their territory constantly declining in size due to the lowlanders' encroachment, and the opening of new tunnels is seen by Anbgayi and other village elders as a direct threat to the survival of village. On their part, the miners are nervous for the near presence of the barbarians, so open war may spark at any time.

There are several more Mountain Rakasta villages further into the hills, and many small nomadic tribes, but Shiudama is the only Mountain Rakasta village that has some contact with the civilized Myoshimans – while the barbarians see this mostly as a nuisance, if not a threat, this contacts have led to some trade. Thus, Shiudama is actually more influent in the local Mountain Rakasta community than other villages of its size.

##### Tawakemono no Youdai

This cave, on the eastern cliffs of the Yuubou mountains, is rumored to be infested by evil spirits. It is actually a fairy dwelling, occupied by a band of 6 mischievous Tanuki (Pooka of levels 3-7). The Tanuki like to disguise themselves as Tengu, evil spirits, or any number of other fearsome monsters, and scare away the local peasants.

##### Yuumei no Hakaba

Outside the village of Yuumei, there is an old graveyard, the Yuumei no Hakaba, that dates back to the time of the Shikken wars. During the war, a detachment of undead warriors attacked the fortress of shugo Hagiwara. Hagiwara and his retainers resisted to the last Rakasta, and were later interred in this graveyard. The graveyard is simply a rectangular wooded area, enclosed by a shallow moat. The ashes of common warriors are simply buried under small mounds, while the tombs of officers were decorated with earthenware statues (*haniwa*) which are widely regarded as housing protector spirits. This is not true – there are no protector spirits, and the statues are just old statues. However, inside five statues (recognizable because they are the only ones representing sabretooth mounts) five magic seals have been inscribed. If the seals are broken, the restless soul of Hagiwara-dono (a Ghost) will be free to roam the province – now it is confined to his tomb during the day, and to the confines of the graveyard during the night. If Hagiwara-dono is freed, he has the power to summon his followers, who take the form of a Ghostly Horde. He does not control them, though – they simply reenact their last battle, but Hagiwara can take advantage of their presence to weaken a group of visitors to the graveyard.

##### Henkyoujo

This fortress, held by loyal shugo Choji Nekoatsu (Samurai 8), controls the road to the Kaitohama province. Henkyoujo was built over an earlier fortress of the Three Hundred Years war (known as Henkyou Honjo), which had been destroyed in the downfall of House Urumi. Henkyou Honjo had been left in

disrepair by the Kaito and the Taikoku clans, until one of the early Inogashira restored it in order to strengthen his position against his former lieges. The original fortress had extensive dungeons, which have not been explored in recent years – this is a potential threat to the fortress, because the dungeons probably had some secret exit, and a knowledgeable enemy could use them to sneak into the castle.

### **Urumi no Jouseki**

The ruins of the old Urumi fortress are a major feature of the province of Senbei. The old castle has been razed to the ground, and only traces of the original structure remain aboveground. Underground tunnels are a different matter – while many passages collapsed, and the original stairs have been destroyed, several new entrances have been dug by explorers and monsters.

While the Urumi clan, before disappearing into the shadows, destroyed or removed most valuables, it is said that, in the clan's decadence, many treasures had been forgotten, buried underground in sealed vaults. The ruins have thus attracted, during the centuries that followed the formation of the empire, a number of adventurers, many of whom perished in the tunnels. The most recent treasure seeker is a wandering magic user, Shigeru (Wu Jen 8/Illusionist 1, NE), who hopes to pry magical secrets from the old libraries and laboratories. Shigeru has set up a camp in the outskirts of the ruins, and is looking for some gullible adventurers to use to map out the dungeons, the traps and the guardians or other threats, before actually entering himself.

### **Hisomuzato**

This countryside village has less than 100 inhabitants, and appears to be nothing more than most other villages in the province.

Its *jito*, the young samurai Yowamushi Kowamoto (Samurai 3) lives in fear of assassination, as he thinks his neighbours covet his fief. Moreover, he believes he has offended a powerful hermit who lives in the jungle north of the village.

The truth is that the *jito*'s fears are mostly unfounded – there's no hermit in the jungle, he was just tricked by one of the Tanuki from Tawakemono no Youdai, and his neighbours have little interest in this modest village. Moreover, he is well protected, as the villagers are part of a small ninja clan, who prefer to have a cowardly fool as the local *jito* rather than a more dangerous and intelligent samurai.

Circa one villager in five is a Shinobi of low to medium level. The clan is led by an elder, or Jounin, named Hayate Kitahiro (Shinobi 9, Genjutsu specialist, Ninja-to Skilled, Ninjutsu Skilled, Shuriken Basic, LE). He is assisted by 5 Chuunin, of level 4-8, and 15 Genin, all of level 1-3. The Hayate clan specializes in Genjutsu, and its members have only limited skills in Taijutsu and none at all in Ninpou. However, they are effective in espionage. These Shinobi mostly serve the provincial lord and his shugo, though rich merchants from Junshu sometimes require their services. They are generally contacted at the monthly fair in Junshu – there is always a well-disguised Shinobi looking for prospective clients, who leave their requests at the feet of Shima's statue in the northern corner of the market square.

### **Master Hakuodo's Abode**

Hakuodo Yusai (Domestic Rakasta Wu Jen 13/Ailuro-mancer 2, CN), a most powerful and eccentric wizard, lives in this lonely cottage. Due to some of his odd taboos, Hakuodo has his fur died in bright colours (red and yellow) composing geometric patterns over his head and arms. Moreover, he never addresses a male Rakasta – when he must speak to someone, he generally tells his apprentice to relate his words.

This middle-aged magic user will only consider female apprentices – his taboos make interaction with a male apprentice troublesome. He already has two pupils: Yukiko (Wu Jen 3, TN), the senior student, who lives at the cottage serving her master, and the daimyo's daughter, Hitomi, whom master Hakuodo is training with the only goal of shaming the daimyo. His plan is to give the daimyo's daughter the means to refuse a marriage, so to have the noblecat lose face with a potential ally.

## Chapter 5

# Dwellers of Myoshima

### 5.1 Movers and Shakers

This section presents a set of Myoshiman NPCs, chosen from all ways of life, from mighty nobles to lowly ashigaru.

**Akita Eichi** The *Nekokiri*, Alley Rakasta Kensei (Matara) 16, NE, age 29.

The "Rakasta-slayer" is a special type swordsmen, whose primary role is that of killer. With respect to Shinobi, the nekokiri does not care for stealth – rather, he is protected by a powerful patron who can employ a network of allies to provide means of escape, travel, and other support to the killer. With respect to the Samurai, the nekokiri is generally of lower class, and is less concerned with honor – while he prefers to face armed opponents in a duel, he has no compunction against striking down defenseless victims if ordered to do so.

Akita Eichi is this age's foremost Samurai assassin. Born to a peasant family, he started his career as a foot soldier in the northern provinces. Thanks to his natural reflexes and bloodthirst, he made his way up through the ranks, becoming the right hand of shugo Shimazu, a retainer of House Ashai. However, the Ashai faction suffered a major defeat, and lord Shimazu died, together with most of his soldiers. Akita survived, and was recruited by the new Ashai daimyo to serve as an elite assassin. His most successful job has been the assassination of the minister of the left, Nekoyama Harunaka, which has considerably weakened the Nekoyama family.

Currently, Akita Eichi is on the run from the imperial agents (the Geki), who are trying to discover who ordered the minister's death. He hides in northern Fudo province, disguised as a wandering Shimaja monk.

**Akiyoda Nekohide** Dainagon (counsellor of state), Domestic Rakasta Samurai 8, LN, age 62.

An elderly Rakasta, Akiyoda Nekohide is one of the members of the Council of State. While he is trained in swordmanship, he never saw the battlefield, having being raised in the sheltered court nobility of Mara. Therefore, he tends to discount the ravages of war, and his counsel is more aggressive than what would be expected of a Rakasta of his age.

Nekohide heads one of the powerful court nobility families, and, while old, he has not yet considered retiring.

**Fushimi Morikade** 3rd class controller of the Ministry of Civil Service, Tsuchigumo Shinobi (Ninpou) 5, LN, age 27.

A short, unassuming bureaucrat, "Fushimi Morikade" is actually a long-term spy planted by the Tsukioka clan into the imperial civil service. Due to the relative difficulty of getting spies into the middle levels of the civil administration, Morikade is rarely called to do more than support roles – the risk of compromising his cover is too high. However, he does provide a lot of inside information to his clan, as well as helping fellow ninja in getting entrance to the Imperial Palace.

**Juemon** Kagemusha, Domestic Rakasta Kensei (Chokuto) 14, TN, age 324.

Born more than three centuries ago, Juemon was a master of an ancient (and now extinct, save for Juemon himself) fencing school, Izawara Ryu. He was captured by the Shikken when his adventuring party entered the lair of the lich, and was turned into an shadow monster.<sup>1</sup> As a Kagemusha, Juemon looks similar to his former self, a tall, muscular Rakasta warrior, though his fur and eyes turned iron gray as a consequence of the magical process he was subjected to; he wears antiquated clothes in dark colours, and wields a chokuto (a straight bladed iron sword). He is strongest in heavy shadows, and weakest in bright light or complete darkness.

While the transformation linked Juemon fully with the Shikken, compelling him to obey the lich's commands, he is not evil per se, and will try to minimize damage to innocent bystanders in any mission he undertakes.

**Kakureshi Kuromaru** The Shikken, Domestic Rakasta (strong Rakshasa Bloodline) Lich, Wu Jen 32/III 5th Circle, CE, age 548.

The former Shikken is know an ancient Lich, and quite likely the most powerful wizard in Myoshima. He still plots the downfall of the imperial house and his own ascension as part of his path to Immortality in the sphere of Entropy. During the last five centuries, the Shikken has suffered several major setbacks, but has never been truly defeated. Moreover, his spies and agents plague the imperial bureaucracy, making him an incredibly powerful enemy – not surprisingly, his plans have been foiled only thanks to the intervention of no less than two successful Immortal candidates!

Currently, the Shikken does not have the support of House Kakureshi – the high number of monks and Shimaja in the family has prevented any further contact with their Entropic ancestor. He controls, however, House Sennyō and House Tokanawa in northern Myoshima by means of his agents, as well as several lesser clans.

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<sup>1</sup>Specifically, a Shade, see AD&D Monster Manual II or Birthright's Blood Spawn: Creatures of Light and Shadow.

The Shikken is best used as the root of the villain tree for a Myoshiman campaign: he never appears directly, but may be confronted early, through layers of underlings. If the PCs want to catch the linchpin, they will need to cut their way through these underlings – who are often quite powerful themselves. The Shikken will not take a direct interest in them – i.e., will not perceive them as a significant threat – unless they are Immortal candidates, powerful political leaders or are in possession of powerful magical items; in short, he will only take action against them when the PCs are in the upper Companion level range. Obviously, before that time, there is plenty of underlings – Kagemusha, Rakshasa, Evil Spirits, and others – whose task is to remove potential threats to the Shikken, and will therefore act to hinder a group of PCs who have been rising too fast in the Myoshiman scene.

**Kamalaksha** Acarya (high priest) of the Orthodox Way of Pakan, Baku Pachydermion Shimaja 20, LG, age 78.

This ancient pachydermion wears the loose, saffron-colored robes of an Orthodox Way Shimaja. A devoted follower of Shima, Kamalaksha is famous for his incredible memory – he remembers, and frequently recites, all of the holy sutras of his faith, a feat not equalled by any Rakasta priest or scholar. One of the few pachydermions to live at the Imperial Court, Kamalaksha would be a powerful political force, given his infallible memory of all that passed at court in the last 50 years, except that he prefers to abstain from taking any action. Still, he is highly appreciated by the more scholarly courtiers, and courted by the greedier ones, who hope to benefit from his knowledge.

**Kanakada Koichi** Daishō (general) of the Ichiyōda army, Alley Rakasta Samurai 18, LN, age 43.

The younger son of a jito vassal of the Katayama clan, Kanakada Koichi has spent all his adult life serving in the house guard of the daimyō of Ichiyōda, raising through the ranks thanks to his martial proficiency, as well as his unshakeable loyalty. General Kanakada currently commands the house army

of the Katayama clan, which makes him one of the most powerful Rakasta in Myoshima.

**Katayama Ichiro** Shogun and Daiymo of Ichiyoda, Alley Rakasta Samurai 23, LN, age 47.

A stout, middle aged Rakasta, the current Shogun is the son of that lord Katayama that first met Prince Haldemar of Haaken, the Alphantian envoy. He has inherited from his father an expansionistic agenda, and is planning the return of Myoshimans to Mystara – he does not believe in the Shima-do view of Mystara as a "lower world", seeing instead Mystara as the ancestral land of the Rakasta.

**Kimura Akane** Domestic Rakasta Samurai 6, NG, age 26.

The daughter of a Samurai family from Mara, Akane was trained in martial arts because her father does not have a male heir. A good fighter with naginata and bow, she is nonetheless better known for the tales of adventure and romance she writes and publishes. What is not generally known is that the tales are mostly based on her own adventures – as she often disguises as a wandering sohei to escape the boredom of city life.

**Kitahara Kojiro** Dainagon (counsellor of state), Alley Rakasta Samurai 7, LE, age 51.

The Emperor's first cousin, Kitahara Kojiro is a major government officer. A warrior of adequate skill, Kojiro nurtures high ambitions – he hopes to exploit the struggle between the factions to force the current Emperor into retirement, engineer the death of the new Emperor, and his own installment in the position of Sessho for a new, underage Emperor.

Kojiro is the seventh member of the imperial house in the inheritance line for the throne, right after Emperor Myoshide's sons and brothers.

**Kitahara Myomichi** Prince of Myoshima, dainagon (counsellor of state), Alley Rakasta Samurai 10, LG, age 39.

The Emperor's younger brother, Prince Myomichi is a placid, somewhat chubby Rakasta that seems contented with his lofty position of prince and

counsellor of state. Indeed, he feels his to be the perfect position to enjoy life and his favorite hobbies – fine food and poetry. He acts as a patron for several young poets and chefs, and is one of the most appreciated hosts in Mara.

As yet unmarried, Prince Myomichi is the one of the most eligible bachelors in the Empire.

**Kitahara Myoshide** Emperor of Myoshima, Alley Rakasta Samurai 20, LN, age 42.

Emperor Myoshide acceded to the throne in 974, at the age of 16. For two years, he was under the regency of Ashai Kamaggi, his grand-uncle – Kamaggi's sister had married Myoshide's grandfather. Later, Myoshide fought a hidden war against Kamaggi and his allies, and five years ago, with the help of the Katayama faction, ousted him from the Shogun position he had secured before leaving the regency. As a consequence, he was forced to allow Katayama to take the Shogun position – to organize and lead an army to the conquest of Mystara. However, the Emperor is aware that Katayama, while a valuable ally, is out for himself, and he does not want to become his puppet. Therefore, Myoshide has had the crown prince, Myosuke, marry a the daughter of daimyo Do Kenji, hoping to break the Katayama faction.

Myoshide is a tall, lanky Rakasta with tiger-like fur, which has grown prematurely gray. He always dresses in the formal robes of the Emperor, and is never encountered outside the Imperial Palace of Mara.

**Kitahara Myosuke** Crown Prince of Myoshima, daijodaijin (chancellor of state), Alley Rakasta Samurai 11, LN, age 24.

The young, energetic heir to the imperial throne, Myosuke recently took the position of chancellor of state, head of the advisors to the Emperor. He takes his new role with zeal, but is hampered by the minister of the left, who is jealous of the younger Rakasta's position, which he finds to be undeserved.

Myosuke is married to 26-years old O-Tei, from the powerful Do clan. They have a single daughter, O-Hina, who is only three years old.

**Kitawara Morikaze** Udaijin (minister of the right), Domestic Rakasta Shinobi (Genjutsu) 10, LN, age 54.

The unchallenged leader of the powerful Kitawara clan, Morikaze is the minister of the right, in charge of four powerful ministries. His clan replaced, centuries ago, the Kakureshi family among the four major court nobility clans. To protect themselves against the Shikken's revenge, the Kitawara have developed an internal "secret service", with the abilities of Shinobi. Morikaze is one of the most powerful Shinobi in his family, though he never uses his powers for hire, but only in service of his family's political ambitions.

The Kitawara hold a long-time grudge against the Nekoyama clan, so Morikaze currently supports Prince Myosuke's initiatives, since his enemy, the minister of the left, opposes them.

**Sugiwara Kuheiji** Domestic Rakasta Thief 4, CE, age 34.

Kuheiji, born of a merchant family, runs a family business selling rice, but has actually little talent and many vices, and only keeps his purse full by supplementing his legitimate income with criminal activities. He always has a new scam ready – from selling low quality merchandise to outright theft.

His favored technique is to plead to a (generous) acquaintance for a loan – a hefty sum, if possible. In return, he gives them a promissory note, signed with his personal seal, which he has already reported the seal as lost (or even stolen) to the local authorities. When the loan is called back, Kuheiji refuses to pay, claiming that he never received any loan, that the promissory note is a fake. Thus, his victims not only lose their money, but are also framed as extortionists, so that Kuehiji needs not to fear for retribution.

**Myobu Mitsuhiko** Dainagon (counsellor of state), Domestic Rakasta Shinkan 6, N, age 43.

A moderately competent Shinkan, Myobu Mitsuhiko is always followed by an hissing snake spirit, luckily visible only to him. The twin brother of Myobu clan chief Mitsuhide, Mitsuhiko holds the slightly less powerful position of counsellor of state.

While he is currently loyal to his brother, the My-

obu family is slowly breaking into two camps, each favoring one of the two brothers and their heirs – Mitsuhiko's son, Tadahiko, is slightly older, and much less eccentric, than the family leader current heir. Moreover, Mitsuhiko has been a member of the Council of State longer than his brother, thus strengthening the faction of the family that would see him or his son as clan leader.

**Myobu Mitsuhide** Nadaijin (minister of the center), Domestic Rakasta Wu Jen 6/Shadow Master 1st Circle, N, age 43.

Myobu Mitsuhide is the current head of the Myobu family, one of the major court nobility clans. A low-level Kage Jutsu user, Mitsuhide has spent most of his adult life in the position of administrative chief of the Ministry of Magic, until his father, the previous minister of the center, retired, leaving the fourth most powerful government post open for his son.

Mitsuhide has one son, Tadahide, who is also a Wu Jen. While Mitsuhide is a moderately powerful, and mostly sane, Wu Jen, Tadahide, at only 16, is a genius magician (Wu Jen 5/Shadow Master 1st Circle) and a very eccentric one, with odd taboos such as dressing only in white (the colour of mourning in Myoshima). This has made Mitsuhide unpopular within his clan, who would prefer the more conservative Tadahiko (Mitsuhide's 20 years old nephew) as the next clan leader.

**Nekoyama Harutomi** Sadaijin (minister of the left), Domestic Rakasta Samurai 5, LE, age 37.

The head of court nobility clan Nekoyama, Harutomi holds the position of Sadaijin, or minister of the left, presiding over four powerful ministries. Clan Nekoyama has a strong control over the ministries of Taxation and Civil Service, allowing them to obtain a greater share of administrative positions than any other clan. However, Harutomi's personal rivalries are hampering the clan growth, and the Sadaijin risks losing the support of his own clan.

**Sosei** Domestic Rakasta Biku 6, LG, age 30.

A wandering monk not attached to a monastery, Sosei is a cheerful fellow with a weak spot for heavily salted

food. He travels through the southern provinces, sometimes carrying messages to and from monasteries, more often on his own, exploring new areas or returning to visit old friends.

A trustworthy follower of Shima-do, Sosei can help a group in need with his healing powers, or request the assistance of a strong-looking party in dealing with threats beyond his powers – such as powerful undead or evil spirits.

**Uesuka Kitamoto** Routaika (Clanmaster) of the Uesuka Shinobi, Domestic Rakasta Shinobi (Taijutsu) 15, LN, age 56.

The leader of one of the most powerful ninja clans of Myoshima, Uesuka Kitamoto is a, tall, grey-furred Rakasta. He poses as a retired Ashigaru retainer of clan Tomokato (one of the vassals of the daimyo of Ichiyoda, the native province of Uesuka clan).

An honorable and efficient combat-oriented ninja, Kitamoto only personally undertakes missions for his most powerful clients, the Shogun and his allies. He favors the ninjato and grappling hook in combat.

**Uesuka Kitikata** Jounin of the Uesuka clan, Domestic Rakasta Shinobi (Ninpou) 10, LN, age 28. Daughter and heir to the Routaika, Kitikata is a slim, good looking Rakasta. She is also a Jounin of Uesuka clan, specializing in hidden movement techniques.

Kitikata runs the day to day activities of the clan, using her powers to carry out messages from her father to other Jounin and Chuunin.

## 5.2 Shinobi Clans

### 5.2.1 Organization

Most shinobi clans are quite small, having about 20 members. These small clans are usually active only in one province, and are structured in three tiers: *genin*, the standard members; *chuunin*, the cell leaders and the clan elders; and, at the top, a single *jounin*, or master shinobi. These clans generally specialize in a single ninja discipline – ninpou, if they have a special clan bloodline; genjutsu, if they are magically adept; or taijutsu otherwise.

Larger clans run between 50 and 100 members. Their structure is more complex, and these clans can take more difficult missions. There is more than one jounin, and one of them is named as clanmaster, advised by the jounin council. The other Jounin are often the leading specialists in taijutsu, ninpou and genjutsu. Jounin are in charge of especially difficult mission, as well as advanced training – basic training is handled by chuunin.

Huge clan are few – only five in the island of Myoshima, plus one in Kitashima. These far-reaching organizations have at least 200 members each (plus non-Shinobi specialists), and handle the espionage business at top level – they are employed by the Emperor, the major daimyo, and other extremely powerful individuals. Here, genin are considered little more than apprentices – only lesser tasks are assigned to them, except in emergencies. Genin teams may handle the preparation or support tasks in a more difficult or extensive job, but assassination is usually left to chuunin squads led by jounin.

### 5.2.2 The Six Clans

This section describes the six more powerful shinobi clans.

#### Urumi

Clan Urumi is the strongest ninja family in southern Myoshima. Carrying the powerful bloodline of the displacer beast allows Urumi shinobi to misdirect the opponent even when they are detected, making them especially dangerous in combat. The Urumi clanmaster takes the title of Kagekimi, or Shadow King.

#### Kurohyou

House Kurohyou has developed the bloodline of the Ebon Tiger – its most powerful members are said to be able to become ethereal at will, rendering most defenses useless against their infiltration skills. Members of this clan favor Genjutsu and Ninpou techniques that make them undetectable, and are more skilled as spies than as assassins. They dominate the espionage business in Kitashima. Like the Urumi

clanmaster, the Kurohyou chief also claims the title of Kagekimi.

### **Uesuka**

A clan less involved in the supernatural, but very active in central Myoshima, the Uesuka work for the Imperial family and for the Katayama as well – they have been extending their business into southwestern Myoshima recently, which puts them at odd with the Urumi. Uesuka shinobi are stronger in taijutsu, and have developed high levels of mastery with all ninja weapons, but are also trained in the other two arts.

The Uesuka leader, who is always the oldest jounin, takes the title of Routaika (elder master).

### **Karasu**

A Tengu-trained clan from the mountains of northern Myoshima, the Karasu are specialized in both taijutsu and genjutsu. They have first introduced the black outfit with red sashes that is known common among shinobi clans, and are one of the few ninja clans to study other sword types besides the ninjato. Tengu specialists are often found operating with Karasu squads.

The Karasu chief takes the title of Kyoyuu (owl chief), to symbolize the stealth and combat prowess of the clan.

### **Tsukioka**

The Tsukioka clan operates in central Myoshima, especially in the Imperial Domain and in the neighbouring provinces. It is specialized in the use of poisons – not surprisingly, since all members are Tsuchigumo (Aranea). Tsukioka shinobi prefer to entangle their targets in layers of genjutsu, strike from hidden positions with blowguns, and then wait for the target to fall under their poisons. This clan has many magic users among its specialists, and some of them are masters of Illusionism or Alchemy.

The Tsukioka leader takes the title of Kumokage (spider's shadow).

Note that the Tsukioka clan has the reputation of being especially evil, and of working for the Shikken.

Neither is true – the Tsukioka are no more evil than other ninja, and work for the Shikken just because the Shikken has no prejudices against Aranea.

### **Mushinzoku**

The only major clan that has no base, being composed entirely of wandering assassins, the Mushinzoku is actually more of a network of Mujina than a real clan. There is no fixed chief, though Mujina elders may gather in times of trouble to discuss the best way to keep their race alive. And there is no real structure – there are no genin or jounin, since each Mujina works on his own.

Generally, the Mujina work on their own or in small cells, using their natural abilities and fighting prowess to perform their jobs (almost always involving murders). Even their contacts with potential clients are handled in a special way – while most clans have known contact points, people whom they visit regularly or locations where a message to the clan can be left, the Mujina simply scan the minds of the people to find potential clients, then offer their services.

Many Mujina like to infiltrate a household by taking the face of a servant, then stun or kill a warrior or samurai, take his weapons, and murder everyone in the house. Mujina are reliable assassins, in that they generally succeed in their task, but they like their job too much, and are likely to kill bystanders, or wipe out an entire clan when asked to kill its leader.

## **5.3 Monsters of Myoshima**

The jungles, mountains and seas of Myoshima are home to many monsters, either native of the invisible moon or brought there by the Rakasta themselves. Moreover, an odd phenomenon known as *Kamikaze* ("divine wind", a type of tornado) occasionally delivers a foreign monster (from Mystara) on the Rakasta lands. The Imperial Guard and the noble houses maintain patrols that routinely check the area where a Kamikaze was last sighted for exotic creatures. These patrols are usually able to deal with medium sized monsters (small monsters often do not survive this rough journey), but the largest beings are some-



times able to survive to this first attacks and proceed to raze entire provinces before being stopped by some heroic Samurai.

For some reason, the most common Kamikaze-carried monsters are dinosaurs and Gargantua. Myoshiman sages suppose that either the Kamikaze form in lost-world areas, or that the mad mage himself, Gargantua, engineers these events for some unknown, but certainly insane, purpose.

The rest of this Section deals with the more common monster types, listed in Table 5.1.

### 5.3.1 Goblinoids

Goblinoids are not found in Myoshima, but have a major place in the Myoshiman legends. Myoshimans divide goblinoids in three classes: Bakemono, Daibakemono, and Oni. Bakemono are smaller goblinoids, basically including only the Goblins, as Myoshimans legends do not mention Kobolds at all. Daibakemono are larger (human or Rakasta-sized) goblinoids, such as Hobgoblins, Orcs and Bugbears.

Oni are the largest of their kind, and in Myoshiman legends they are also powerful magic users. However, the Oni class includes also other monstrous humanoids, such as the Ushi-oni, an ox-headed “demon” known as Bargda on Mystara.

While no goblinoids are found in modern Myoshima, nor on Patera in general, it is possible that a powerful Oni or Daibakemono wizard be able to open a gate from the Yazak Steppes to Myoshima and lead an invasion. The Myoshimans would thus be faced with their ancestral enemies, as well as with the ghosts of their ancestors’ defeat at the hands of those same goblinoids.

### 5.3.2 Faeries

The Four Fairy Brothers lead a small Faerie Court in the jungles of Myoshima. This court is mostly populated by Sidhe and Pooka, though Brownies and Drakes are also present, and Hamadryads are frequent guests.

Myoshiman Pooka appear generally as cats (Bak-eneko), foxes (Nogitsune) or raccoon dogs (Tanuki),

though other forms are also possible, including frogs and turtles.

### 5.3.3 Near-Humans and Unhumans

Several types of less common humanoids are found in Myoshima, or in the freshwater seas. Most of them are available as Player Creatures.

Among the Myoshiman sea people, Merkasta (Ningyo) and Shark-kin (Kojin) are most common, while Tengu, Sasquatches, and Araneas are found in Myoshima itself, the first two in small groups in the wilderness, the latter hiding among the Rakasta.

Snappers (Kappa) and Mujina (also known as Mushin) are present, but not generally available as Player Creatures.

### 5.3.4 Animal Spirits

Many animal spirits show interest in the events of Myoshima. Truly minor spirits may appear as familiars, or Shikigami. Some are generally beneficent, though they are endowed limited powers, such as the Myobu kitsune (celestial fox spirit) and the Nekomata (a type of cat spirit considered a lucky omen by the Rakasta). Others are vengeful spirits, such as the Inugami – a type of dog spirit that haunts cursed Myoshimans.

Finally, some are truly powerful, but unpredictable, such as the Raiju, a great cat spirit with great powers over the elements.

### 5.3.5 Undead

Due to the troubled and warlike past of Myoshima, there are many undead roaming the land. Those undead that gain sustenance from the living, such as Nosferatu, Vampires, and Ghouls are generally known as Gaki.

Specific subtypes include the Jikiniki (Ghost), the Nukenubi (Penanggalan) and the Yuki-onna (a type of heat draining Vampires who cause a Constitution drain instead of sucking blood or life energy).

Ghosts, both corporeal (Shinnentai or Revenants) and incorporeal (Yuurei), are also common.

Table 5.1: Monsters of Myoshima

Baba	Hag	Ningyo	Merkasta
Bakemono	Goblin	Nopperabou	Nupperibo
Bakeneko	Pooka	Nukenubi	Vampire, Penanggalan
Baku	Baku	Oni	Ogre Magi
Daibakemono	Hobgoblin, Bugbear	Oni-bi	Wychglow
Gaki	Nosferatu, Vampire, Ghoul	Oukuri-inu	Barghest
Gashadokuro	Bone Golem	Raiju	Cat Spirit, major
Hengeyoukai	Werebeast	Rasetsu	Rakshasa
Hengeyousei	Drake	Ryuu	Dragon
Hibagon	Sasquatch	Shachihoko	Fish, Giant Catfish
Hitodama	Will o' the Wisp	Shikigami	Familiar
Hou-ou	Phoenix	Shinnentai	Revenant
Ikiryō	Lost Soul	Tako	Octopus, giant
Inugami	Dog spirit, major	Tanuki	Pooka
Jikiniki	Ghast	Takebokugou	Bamboo Golem
Jubokko	Killer Tree	Tengu	Tengu
Kappa	Snapper	Tennin (f. Tennyō)	Celestial
Kirin	Kirin	Tora	Tiger
Kitsune, Myōbu	Fox spirit	Tsuchigumo	Aranea
Kitsune, Nogitsune	Pooka	Tsukumogami	Huptzeen
Kodama	Hamadryad	Ushi-oni	Bargda
Kojin	Shark-kin	Yamabito	Rakasta, Mountain
Kumo	Spider, giant	Youkai	Fiend (any)
Kurage-no-hinotama	Jellyfish	Yousei	Sidhe
Kurai-tora	Ebon Tiger	Yuki-onna	Vampire
Mujina	Mujina	Yuurei	Ghost (any)
Mukade	Centipede, giant	Zashiki-warashi	Brownie
Nekomata	Cat spirit		

Some undead are also created by evil wizards, chief among them the Shikken. Specifically, the Kagemusha (Shade), Yoroimusha (Doom guard), Noroimusha (Skeleton Warrior), and Shiryoumusha (Skeleton) were all created by the Shikken during the VI and VII centuries AC.

While not a true undead, the Ikiryō is a disembodied soul of the living – trapped in Limbo after being petrified or otherwise separated from their bodies by some event.

### **5.3.6 Dragons**

Dragons (Ryū) are highly respected for their power. Myoshiman dragons abide to tight hierarchies of power, with old dragons controlling large territories and many subjects. Few rogue dragons exist at any time, generally concealing their presence in the most remote wilderness, or, in the case of intelligent, shapeshifting rogues, among the citizens of the Myoshiman cities. Blue, jade, green, sea and gold dragons are the most common subspecies.

### **5.3.7 Planeborns**

Several types of extra-planar creatures find their way to the Empire of Myoshima. Myoshimans tend to lump most celestials together under the name of Tenjin (f. Tennyō), while the denizens of the lower planes are generally known as Youkai. Those lesser fiends who bear no recognizable appearance, such as the Lemures, Manes and Dretches are collectively known as Nopperabou.