





f all the clans under control of the new Shōgunate, the Dragon clan is the most religious, deeply attached to nature and to the world of the yōkai, with which they feel completely in tune, despite the dangers that many yōkai present. Their beliefs are instilled in children from a very young age, so that they accept the existence of supernatural creatures and are often extremely curious about them. They especially venerate their ancestors and feel obliged to fulfill, to the extreme, the wishes of those who lose their lives. They do this because they are convinced that the soul of the deceased will not rest until his or her last wish has been fulfilled. The Dragon Clan's union with nature motivates them to give animals a great presence in daily life, both their livestock and their great many pets. Dogs and cats are omnipresent, but it is not unusual to find a member of the Dragon Clan with an uncommon pet like the macaques native to Japan.

Their mysticism goes back to the origins of the clan itself. Tradition has it that this house was created by a mythical and enigmatic yōkai dragon who lived in Lake Biwa. According to legend, this powerful creature granted a wish to a wise hermit who was the first of the clan, and who adopted

the name of the being that founded it. Also, it is said that the dragon gave the men a jade jewel of great power that they could use to defend their clan. At present, no one can be sure if this story is true, but some say that this jewel could be hidden in the most sacred and inaccessible corner of a secret sanctuary.

A festival in honor of the legendary dragon has come down through the generations and is repeated every year at the arrival of spring. Parents and their children fly countless dragon-shaped kites, filling the sky with colors to remember and honor the yōkai who created them.

It is not surprising that many in the Dragon Clan are monks, who live scattered throughout its territory in numerous temples. It is precisely in these religious complexes that knowledge is treasured, and libraries comprised of hundreds and hundreds of manuscripts gathered since the beginning of time are cared for. Given so much knowledge, many insist that the monks responsible for these ancient archives can control aspects of the yōkai magic.

Apart from monks secluded in shrines, the clan is divided into five large families. They are mostly peasants with few resources, for this house is one of the poorest and humblest in all of Japan, a situation that has worsened after

the war. They grow rice, an important product. It feeds the population and is made into the traditional sake, high-proof brandy, ropes, sacks, and greatly appreciated Japanese paper. The Dragon Clan also grows highly valued wheat, rye, soybeans, buckwheat, sorghum, and tea.

The Shōgun's punishment of the Dragon Clan for supporting the emperor has been brutal. They are strictly guarded by the minions of the Shōgun, and they also suffer from the significant tax increase decreed by

him, a punishment for people who were already very poor.

An additional threat is posed by the powerful Sika Clan, whose lands are just west of them. This rival supported the Shōgun during his rebellion and now enjoys great prestige that it intends to take full advantage of. The Dragon Clan lost most of its samurai in the war, and the Sika have craved its land for centuries. The wind brings rumors that the Sika plan an invasion, an attack that could exterminate and destroy the entire Dragon Clan.



HIKARU

Hikaru's destiny was marked by the loss of his parents when he was only nine. His father was the first to die. The Empire was suffering from a great famine that was particularly harsh for the peasants. Lacking strength and utterly weak, because he gave all his food to his wife and son, Hikaru's father was soon taken by a fever. A few months later, the same fate befell the mother of the

little boy. Before she passed away, she asked Hikaru to always be a good person and defend others, especially the poor and vulnerable, throughout his life. This last wish, and the vision of his mother's deathbed, remained engraved in Hikaru's memory.

Orphaned and alone in the world, the boy somehow came to live in a humble shrine near the city of Miyazu. Raised there by monks who welcomed him



as one of their own, Hikaru began to learn the keys to Shintoism, a religion based largely on ancestor worship and veneration of the forces of nature, along with the energies that govern it. It was not surprising that when he grew up, he decided to join his life definitively to his shrine. He became a fervent monk, and he developed a special interest in the world of the yōkai. The monks rewarded his deep study by making him custodian of their library. There, he read ancient writings about occult yōkai energies that humans could control by means of difficult, structured training. Hikaru had never seen a yōkai, but these methods captivated him. He fasted, meditated, practiced, and studied, developing without realizing it, extraordinary mental power.

Hikaru knew that life is more than an exercise of the mind. He hardened his body with martial arts.

Then came the war against the Shōgun. Hikaru's Dragon Clan fought for the emperor. After the emperor's defeat and the rise of the tyrant, the impoverished peasants of his house suffered the consequences. The Shōgun decreed an excessive tax increase, and they could not cope with it. The minions of the dark Lord punished and humiliated them, whipping an oppressed people who could not defend themselves.

Hikaru watched this suffering in silence, impassive, trying to conceal his feelings, but he remembered what he had promised his dying mother. His blood boiled, and the idea of leading a revolt awoke in him. He knew he ought to ignite the spark that would lead to a rebellion, the flame for an uprising to overthrow the Shōgun, but he did not know how to do it. His people suffered every day. He wished he knew how to gain followers, men and women who would fight for their freedom, to put an end to the usurper who now ran their lives.

The texts in his library spoke of objects of power and legendary weapons. If he might find them and wield them, he could inspire all the people to revolt. But where were those magical things?

He felt isolated, unable to begin this titanic task, with no clear way to initiate the cleansing that would release Japan from the tyrant. He questioned his hatred. Was it too weak? Was he?

One day, in the stillness of his library, a tengu appeared, a creature whose words astounded Hikaru and gained all his attention. From that moment on, the monk's life took an unexpected turn. A new path began in his own sanctuary, and he knew not where it might lead him...

On your way to Iga, you cross a long, narrow wood bridge. A tall, ungainly woman in purplish robes meets you, right in the middle, bringing you to a stop. She wears a black cap with a long tail that flutters in the breeze. She flourishes her long, long bo stick—in a friendly way—and says, “Hikaru. Hikaru! Can you be in three places at once?”

“No,” you reply. “I cannot.”

“Well, I wish you could!” she says.

“The kami will smile upon you, if you can only solve two problems at once.”

You sigh. “There are so many issues to address, and I’ve been told to go to Iga. What do you want of me?”

“Oh, not me. But if you would only go to Ise, you would see that something there has driven the animals mad, and maybe even long forgotten deities may have something to do with it. Do you care? Or if you might only be in Kobe, you would see two huge yōkai fighting each other. Could you gain knowledge from it? Or if you

reach nearby Takashima, you would find the library bursting into flames, and you might save it!”

“I could do all three, if I only had the time,” you say.

“Oh, no, you can’t!” the tall woman replies. “But I, Sakiko, am here to warn you that right now, you must choose.”

You close your eyes to consider these alternatives. When you open them, you are alone. You can only do one of these:

Consequences:

- Place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token in Ise. If you interact with it,  **402**.
- Place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token in Kobe. If you interact with it,  **412**.
- Place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token in Takashima. If you interact with it,  **417**.
- If you do not interact with any of them by the end of this phase, mark “**Disgraced**”.





402

In the fields of Ise, you realize what the tall woman warned you about: every animal here is acting violently. Milk cows side-bump each other, mooing in pain. Hawks claw at each other overhead. A hummingbird ignores its flowers, trying to spear other birds with its tiny bill.

You call a few villagers for an explanation, but they just run away. One of them dives into a barrel. You walk up to it quietly, peer down into its depths, and ask: "What has gotten into all the animals?"

Two frightened eyes look up at you. The villager says, "I never want to see it again! A huge yōkai head, it ate my brother. It frightened the animals. Each one that the head passed started trying to fight and kill the others."

"A great head wandered about here?" you ask. "Striking and killing at random?"

"Oooh, no, worse than that. A cunning demon rides it, a smart thing, choosing the best way to make the head do its worst! Now leave me, please. What if it comes back?"

Consequences:

- Mark **"Mind Control"**.
- Remove the rest of Hikaru's personal mission tokens.

403

You have come to the Dosojin Shrine, hoping it will have ancient records about the horrific monster you seek, the enormous yōkai that used fire



so well. You were in a hurry, but everyone here is relaxed. Rooms are filled with sheets of rice paper and scrolls; so much information gathered over time!

Feeling very calm, you settle in for a half day of close reading. You find some hints about a demon with a sword that drips fire, and a suggestion that if it is ever near death, it will become unimaginably dangerous. But that's not what really grabs your interest.

You pick up a dusty scroll, and an ancient sheet of rice paper falls out, covered with tiny writing. It's about a kami who used to take a special interest in the Dragon clan, your own clan: The Dragon kami, Ryujūn. The writer recounts a story you know well: Ryujūn retired to his underwater palace, and nothing has been heard from him for centuries. The writer wasted, it seems, almost all of the paper with his speculations on why this happened. At the very bottom of the second side, he, or she, wrote, "I know how to awaken Ryjun, but there's no space to write about that here."

Well, if the writer had no room here, where did they write, instead? You search the room, shaking one scroll after another. (Of course you are careful to put each scroll back where it belongs.) At last you find it: another

small paper like the first falls out of a scroll.

This paper says nothing about Ryujūn, but it describes unusual ways to purify oneself, and then a specific sentence to pronounce, that speaks of drying and opening a god's eyes. And it's written in the same hand! What would it mean to get the attention and aid of Ryujūn. You must try this!

But you must bide your time. The writer says that the ritual can only be performed at certain times in the year.

Decide:

- If you have not done it already, mark: **"Hunter"**.
- Mark **"The Legend of the Dragon Clan"**.

Attribute test + (9)

  415.

  416.

404

You have done well, considering everything else you had to do, to prepare for an attack on the leader of the Inugami clan. He is nearby, and you have brought those ninja women, the Iga assassins, to help you.

You find him, and you attack!

The villager had advised you that the general would have few guards for protection, but he was not exactly right.

Consequences:

- Place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token north of Himeji. If you interact with it, keep reading:

You sneak up on the camp and try to memorize the guards' movements. If you have the ability, it may be possible to infiltrate and eliminate Asai at night.

Attribute test (4)

  405.

  407.



- If you do not interact with it by the end of this phase, mark **"Disgraced"**.

405

You fall upon their camp at night. The Iga women scream and shout as you approach, and manage to make some of Asai Tomoatsu's guards flee. However, he tries to stand up to them. Many female assassins fall defeated



but eventually the few remaining guards and the general himself are slain.

News of your achievement spreads quickly. All the clans are deeply grateful to you for breaking the yoke that the terrible general was subjecting them to, and that is why they will give you all their support from now on.

Consequences:

- Mark 2 boxes in **"Firefly Clan"**, **"Mountain Clan"**, **"Dragon Clan"** and **"Sakura Clan"**.
- Mark **"All with you"**.

Before you can leave, Master Bubashi taps your wrist. "Hikaru, Sakiko has told me of your extra efforts, and the clan leaders all say that you truly made a difference. All the clans—they are so grateful for how you handled the Inugami General—have helped me construct something to assist you in your studies. Please take this illuminated magnifying glass."

Bubashi hands you a round, convex piece of glass. You've never seen anything like it, and you examine it with a sense of awe. A circling piece of metal around the glass provides a thick, wide casing, and there is a handle. You look through the glass and see that everything looks larger! What a fine way to help you read the tiny characters you often find in mysterious manuscripts.

Bubashi opens a small compartment in the case. "You can put a dozen or so fireflies in here. I understand there is some magic involved. The fireflies will blink constantly to cast their light on whatever the glass examines, and they will remain alive in there for many hours. Before you sleep, you can open the case and let them go."

You hold this miraculous thing, feeling truly rewarded and absolutely delighted to own it. There is an irony here, and you pause to ponder it: You were born into the Dragon clan.

Akira is of the Firefly clan, so it might be more appropriate for him to have an instrument that uses fireflies. But Akira is blind, and you are the scholar. You try to imagine a similar glass that could utilize the fires from tiny dragons, but that would be quite impossible!

You say, "Master, great thanks. I know you have saved me from many hours of frustration."

407

You fall upon their camp at night. The Iga women scream and shout as you approach, and manage to make some of Asai Tomoatsu's guards flee. However, he tries to stand up to them. Suddenly an alarm horn sounds and more and more soldiers begin to appear. The man tricked you... Tomoatsu was not unprotected, it was a trap.

The exchange of blows is terrible. The lifeless bodies of both enemy soldiers and female assassins are piling up. Your healing spells are unable to keep the assassins in the fight and you are overcome by the enemy. You have no choice but to flee. You barely manage to help one of the women, who is bleeding from the side, to escape. The raid has been a disaster.

News of your failure spreads quickly. All the clans are deeply disappointed because the yoke to which the

terrible general subjected them has increased and hardened, and that is why they believe less and less in you.

Consequences:

- Remove 1 box in "**Firefly Clan**", "**Mountain Clan**", "**Dragon Clan**" and "**Sakura Clan**".
- Mark "**Disgraced**".

408

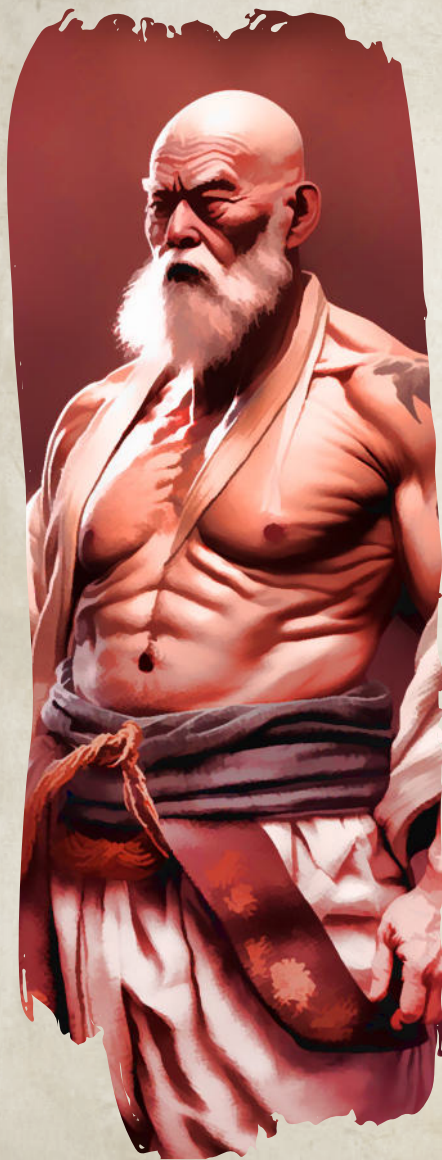
Before you can leave, Master Bubashi taps your wrist. "Hikaru, Sakiko has told me of your attempt to deal with the Inugami general, and we know you did not succeed."

Deep shame washes over you. You close your eyes and say, "I know. I have failed. I did not need to be reminded of this, but thanks. I deserve this extra misery that you have pressed upon me."

Bubashi shakes his head. "Unfortunately, many people, as you know, suffered even more, although you might have helped them. I know that this failure can cloud your future studies, every minute."

Your throat goes tight. You manage to say, "I do not know how I will ever concentrate on anything, ever again." "When you return to your monastery," the master says, "I advise you to think deeply about the results of what you did not do. You must try to truly comprehend it."

"I cannot bear that," you reply.



Master Bubashi relaxes, and smiles. "There is always the future. You may yet have a role to play in the Shōgun's downfall. Take the measure of your failure and fully accept it. And then, take a fresh scroll and write the story of your failure upon it. Because then, your mind will be able to set it aside. You again will be able to study, and perhaps, in the future, you can help us. None of us is perfect, Hikaru! Bear up."

409

You have done well, along with all your other adventures, to prepare to fall upon the Inugami general's caravan. It was carrying gold that he had stolen to line his own pockets. You will need the support of your own clan now, and the more they support you, the better. You find a place where the road is rough. The caravan moves slowly as it approaches, and it is not well-guarded. You attack!

Attribute test 🐉 (6) add the boxes in "Dragon Clan" to the roll.



📖 410.



📖 411.

410

Getting your hands on General Inugami's money was brilliant! He never suspected that people were

paying off the debt with his own money.

News of your achievement spreads quickly. All the clans are deeply grateful, and will give you their full support from now on.

Consequences:

- Mark 1 box in *"Firefly Clan"*, *"Mountain Clan"*, *"Dragon Clan"* and *"Sakura Clan"*.
- Mark *"All with you"*.

411

The assault is a disaster. The caravan was not really poorly protected, it

was a trap. As you and your clan members rush the caravan, more and more Shōgun soldiers begin to appear on horseback. Soon you are surrounded by a large number of enemies. The corpses of your clan's people begin to pile up on the ground. Your healing power is not enough to keep them in the fight and you are forced to flee.

News of your failure spreads quickly. All the clans are deeply disappointed that the yoke of the terrible general has increased and hardened, and that is why they believe less and less in you.



Consequences:

- Remove 1 box in *"Firefly Clan", "Mountain Clan", "Dragon Clan"* and *"Sakura Clan"*.
- Mark *"Disgraced"*.

412

Near Kobe, you notice a scorched area. You realize that you must investigate it. There are many dead animals here. Many of them died from fiery burns, and many seem to have been running in crazed fear as they died.

There are clear signs that two enormous yōkai fought a duel to the death, but they broke away from their combat, and each escaped in a different direction. Their combat wounded the ground itself. One immense yōkai used fire to advantage, but you cannot see exactly how. The other immense creature seemed more intelligent in its movements, as if under control of a smart, evil mind. Sometimes it bit, tearing animals in two or seizing a bite of its opponent's flesh. You'd like to know more about both of these yōkai, but time is short.

Should you concentrate on the yōkai that spewed fire, or the yōkai controlled by evil intelligence?

Decide:

- If you focus on the first one, mark *"Fire and destruction"*.
- If you focus on the second one, mark *"Mind control"*.

- Remove the rest of Hikaru's personal mission tokens.

413

You follow the monster's trail to a fortress, and you hide. Soon, you see the monster going out and rushing away. Its enormous head has great teeth, and a demon rides it, guiding it on the way. You carefully slink away, and you find many villagers nearby. They all seem terribly demoralized, and yet, they are not in terror of the awful thing that you just saw.

You ask a villager what's going on.

"Oh, that's the Tsurube Otoshi and its guiding demon," the man says. "We were so afraid when it first came here! But we discovered that it only goes elsewhere to wreak death and destruction, so we've gotten used to it. But that's nothing!"

The villager pauses, while you wonder what could be worse than all those deaths.

The man says, "The Tsurube Otoshi set a general of the Inugami Clan, Asai Tomoatsu, over us, over our large part of Japan. He makes the Inugami tax us until there's nothing left. We will starve! We'll freeze in our tattered clothing. Please, help us."

"How?" you ask.

"Very soon, there will be no way to help. But right now, there's hope. The Inugami general has sent most



of his troops out to collect our meager things that remain. You have time to plan an attack on him, to make him stop."

The villager gives you a sly look, and he peers both ways to make sure you are alone. "And there is another way. You could pay him."

The villager grins. "Asai Tomoatsu lines his own pockets from the taxes. A caravan bearing his thieving gold has passed the Dragon clan's fields on its way to Edo. Plunder that caravan and pay the general every penny of his own money that he embezzled. He'll never know the difference."

The villager is right: you have just enough time to follow up on one of these plans. Which shall it be? Attack, or plunder?

You will need to decide later on. Right now you have other priorities to take care of.

414

You awaken to a perfect day: a clear sky, a gentle breeze, and the knowledge that it might be possible to awaken the Dragon kami, Ryujūn. You can only hope that the writer at the Dosojin shrine really understood what to do.

You spend a few hours in the recommended purification, bathing, meditating, and donning the simplest of garments. You stand in a pool of shallow water, and you pray, three times:

*"Ryujūn, dry your eyes.
Ryujūn, open your eyes.
Your clan,
My clan,
We need you."*

You have the feeling that you are perceiving vibrations that go beyond the earthly. Will you be able to understand them?

Attribute test (6)

 **Failure:** You do not seem to be able to understand what is going on around you and you leave.

 **Success:** Keep on reading.
Yes, you notice the energy that surrounds you, an energy that connects you with your ancestors. Will you be able to contain it?

Attribute test (6).

 **Success:** Mark *"The Legend of the Dragon Clan"*,  415.

 **Failure:** Energy around you dissipates in a comforting warmth. Regain all your .

415

All around you, the water swirls. Tiny waves form and lick your feet. Among the waves, you spy a tiny, long, brown and spiky dragon. It flits above the little waves like a tiny bird, but it grows, getting larger and larger as it

*flies high into the sky, so high that it vanishes from view. But you hear its voice: "Hikaru, I am with you. I am with your clan."
This has to be good news.*

Consequences:

- Mark *"Ryūjin awakens"*.
- You have unlocked a new kami: Ryūjin. Draw its kami card. You can swap your current kami for Ryūjin, keeping your current affinity level. You can only decide to do so right now.

416

*Nothing happens.
You hope that all the purification you performed was good for you. That writer was probably just making things up.*

Consequences:

- Regain 5 .
- Gain 1 .

417

*It's a good thing you chose to go to Takashima. You arrived in time to quench a fire at a Dragon clan shrine. "How did this ever get started?" you ask. "It looks like it erupted all at once."
A monk shakes his head sadly. "There was so much of value here. We have plenty of water, and we thought*

we were ready for disaster. But a horrible creature came, a big winged demon carrying a scythe with a giant demon's head. It blew just once in passing, a breath of fire that engulfed everything. I have no idea what it might have been."

An old woman, a senior monk, disagrees. "We only got a brief glimpse of the thing. That confused us. But our scholarly tomes discuss this demon. Come. I will tell you."

She gives you a few scraps of information about the monster, but you don't learn enough to know what you might do. Seeing your frustration, she says, "If you ever have the chance,

I'm sure you can learn more at the Dosojin shrine."

Consequences:

- Mark **"Fire and destruction"**.
- Remove the rest of Hikaru's personal mission tokens.

418

You see Sakiko's bo stick before you see her. She approaches and greets you. "Hikaru, you were almost in two places at once."

"Really? I was? Where?"

"Why, at Dosojin Shrine. You chose very well, there. We all feel Ryujun's love now, and we are glad you



awakened him. I have a special reward for you: you shall have a long life of studies."

"I can only hope to study someday," you say. "We must first defeat the Shōgun, that dark tyrant. I fear I might have to sacrifice my life to do that."

"We shall see," Sakiko says. "We shall see."

419

You see Sakiko's bo stick before you see her. As she approaches, you can only feel shame.

"Hikaru," she says, "you were almost in two places at once."

"Really? I was? Where?"

"At Dosojin shrine. You came there to learn about the Demon Hunter, did you not?"

You nod and look away.

"You chose a good place to look. There was information there, valuable to you. It might have helped. You know that."

You remember, all too well. You had found out a little about the Demon Hunter, but then you followed that very different idea.

"Ryujūn, the Dragon Kami, continues to sleep," she says. "Many have tried to awaken him. Why did you feel you would be the one?"

"I thought I had found something important."

Sakiko's voice is cold. "You wasted our time."

When you find the nerve to look back at her, you discover that she is gone.

420

You keep the leads you discovered some time ago. You feel like you are getting closer to your target.

Consequences:

- If you have the mark **"Fire and destruction"**, remove mission card number 3 and its token. Place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token south of Tamba. If you interact with it,  413.



- If you have the mark **"Mind control"**, place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token in Dosojin's Sanctuary. If you interact with it,  **403**.



- If you do not interact with either of them by the end of this phase, mark **"Disgraced"**.

421

It is time to decide. Will you aim for the general or will you try to raid the taxes cargo?

Consequences:

- If you decide to attack the general,  **404**.



- If you decide to raid the cargo,  **409**.
- If you do not interact with it by the end of this phase, mark **"Disgraced"**.

422

You know that the ritual to awaken Ryūjin can only be performed at specific times of the year. The date is near.

Consequences:

- Place 1 Hikaru Personal Mission token north of Takashima. If you interact with it,  **414**.
- If you do not interact with it by the end of this phase, mark **"Disgraced"**.

