

in return: to train the player characters in martial arts, teach meditation, answer some great Mythos mystery, teach an ancient language, relate the cosmology of the Six Realms and the Japanese Dreamlands, or heal the mind of an ailing person.

Twists: The Tendai monk is actually a Green Cap of the order of the Brotherhood of the Black Lotus. He has shadowed the investigators to this location while arranging for some backup. Upon piercing the illusion placed around the monastery, the player characters have only a few hours before the Green Cap and his enforcers arrive. There are a dozen well-armed Dragon Lord foot soldiers who have orders to find the investigators by following the homing beacon in the o-fuda wooden plank. They are to take the sutra, kill the tengu, murder the investigators, and destroy the monastery, in that order. Just before the Yakuza attack, a ghostly image of the Green Cap will appear and gloat before the player characters, via a spell enchanted into the wooden plank. At a safe distance down the mountain, the Green Cap awaits the pilfered sutra, to be returned via his enforcers.

Echoes of a Bell

*Echoes of a bell.
Shadow thirsts timeless spark.
Winter voice whispers.*

Premise: The curator of the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno Park has contacted several of the investigators who have high Library Use skills. He is Junichi Sumeda, a pleasant man with graying hair and a pencil behind his ear. For the last three consecutive nights, he has seen a shadowy form moving among the shelves of the rare occult collection. Sumeda has tried to catch the interloper, but after thorough searches has found no evidence of a break-in or theft. Nonetheless, to be safe, the curator has asked the investigators and their trusted friends to inventory the rare occult collection to verify that no theft has taken place.

Task: The investigators should jump at this offer, as it presents a chance to explore the collection of Cthulhu Mythos knowledge in the National Museum. What and whether they find anything of use is up to the keeper. To keep things low key, the curator asks the investigators to help do the inventory after closing hours. The curator's youngest brother, Hiroshi, has stopped by to lend a hand too. In his thirties, Hiroshi is a bit flaky and into trendy stuff, as evidenced by his sunglasses and teal silk jacket. He couldn't pass up the offer: he's a journalist who writes a daily haiku column for the *Asahi News*.

There is an event the first night. A power outage of a few seconds is accompanied by the deep resonance of an ancient bronze temple bell far in the distance. The lights go back on and no one is worse for wear. The interesting thing about the sound is that it seems distant and northerly to everyone listening, no matter where they were. Spooked, the curator calls it a night and announces he's going to do some reading before dozing off. He pulls a peculiar book from his suitcase: its cover appears crafted from a tan military shirt. Investigators can still see the buttons and pocket with a tag bearing the name *Shintaro Ikeda* on it. If asked outright about the book, he absently remarks that it's a book that's been in the rare collection for years, and he's been meaning to read. Sumeda leaves the museum to go home.

Consequences: The next day, Curator Sumeda never shows up for work. If the investigators go to his house, they find the door locked. Apparently no one is home. A small Zen garden is in his back yard (rocks and raked sand). Breaking and entering, the player characters find that he was a single man, messy, with stacks of books everywhere. There is no trace of the curator. The only clues of wrongdoing are small dried splatters of blood on his desk and leather chair. There is no trace of the book he left with the night before.

Echoes Papers #1: Newspaper Clipping

ASAHI EVENING NEWS

14/6/2004

HERE'S HAIKU! BY SUMEDA HIROSHI

Summer heat, steel blade
Warrior blood grows cold
Chaos feeds his hate.

Emerald chants
For a dead heart, Buddha cries
Green robes hide true lies.

Dragon slumbers deep
Serpent's tongue blindness keeps
In the blood, truth creeps.

—Ikeda Shintaro, *Rock Garden on Infinity*.

For more in this collection, come to the Snow Hut in Roppongi Ward tonight at 9 P.M. for a live performance.

The curator's younger brother, Hiroshi, has a key to the Sumeda family home. He stopped by just before the investigators. He noticed the peculiar cloth book on his brother's desk in the den and scanned it. Seeing numerous disturbing haiku in the book, he took it. At work, Hiroshi copied three haiku from the pages and worked up a haiku newspaper column analyzing the haiku for the *Asahi Evening News*, circulation 20 million. The bottom of the column mentions that he will do a public poetry reading of the book tonight at the Snow Hut, a swank club in Tokyo's Roppongi Ward. (**Note:** names in the hand-out above are presented Japanese style, with the family name first.)

Twists: The shadowy figure the curator noticed was the Aku-Shin Kage partially manifesting each night the curator read the tome *Rock Garden on Infinity*. The avatar claimed the curator's soul on the fourth night, drawing it into the shadows forever. What the three haiku in the article cause is up to the keeper. Most likely they may prompt hundreds of nervous breakdowns and angry paranoid episodes, even a few heart attacks. Many readers will have half-remembered nightmares and vague disturbing thoughts for many days to come.

The live poetry reading, however, is highly dangerous as the haiku read in sequence as linked verse, or *renga*, are a Mythos ritual. If allowed, mayhem results when the blood-oozing armor of Aku-Shin Kage manifests from the shadows of the club to claim Hiroshi. Any witnesses will also share his fate. A packed house could mean up to a hundred in the audience.

A Kappa's Pity

Premise: In recent months, there have been an alarming number of drownings and bizarre water mishaps reported off the shores of subtropical Okinawa Prefecture. Unreliable accounts claim the culprits of these incidents to be umi-bohzu, restless spirits of drowned sailors or sea monsters.

Task: The investigators have been asked by Todai University VP Naoki Satō to look into the cases in Okinawa with hopes of debunking the wild claims or at least offering rational explanations for the deaths and mutilations. Hiro Fuji, Todai's resident underwater archeologist, has agreed to aid the player characters, and puts his facilities at their disposal. He will not become directly involved as long as the investigators follow Todai's guidelines.