

Yamamoto, Meng Guo and Dosan: the Far East

as of 15 Nov 2003

Note to GMs and Players Alike

Please *please* please, when developing Yamamotoan and other Dosanese things, keep them as straightforward as possible. We'd rather not have this packet have to stretch out to ninety pages of random trivia. What this means is: if the historical East Asian concept holds up in Quest, use it. For sure, there are some non-historical elements in Dosan, due to the active presence of magic and the gods (see Appendix B for some examples). But if there's no good reason to deviate from history, don't. It makes Dosan easier to learn if it's pretty much like East Asia. For instance, don't decide that third sons of Yamamotoan nobles all get sacrificed to the gods, unless that was true in Japan. (Which, by the way, it most certainly was not.)

Reminder to Players:

As the rules state under the entry for "Yamamoto", if you're planning on playing a Yamamotoan, you'll need to get the character approved by the Game World Committee.

Understanding Yamamoto

Playing a Yamamotoan

Almost everyone playing a Dosanese will a Yamamotoan, since Yamamoto is the only Dosanese country to have significant numbers of people in Hesket. Due to the current hostility between Yamamoto and Hesket (and the resulting security concerns), Yamamotoan ships aren't likely to bring Dosanese foreigners along. Thus, this document focuses on Yamamotoans. However, we've included information on the rest of Dosan for your reference, and so that Yamamotoan PCs and NPCs, when prompted, are not totally ignorant of the world that surrounds their homeland!

Yamamoto Today

Yamamoto is as much like Japan as Hesket is like Europe and the Mediterranean. The country is feudal, ruled in name by an Emperor and in practice by a Shogun, with local nobles (daimyo) holding land at a local level. Serving the nobility are the samurai, a class of professional warriors. Culturally, Yamamoto holds the same concerns for honor and public "face" that medieval Japan did.

There are a few differences between Yamamoto and Japan, however. Magic is, of course, active and accepted. The various creatures of Japanese legend really do exist. The divine powers are provably manifest. And there are other more subtle differences: Yamamoto consists of a host of smaller islands, sort of like the Philippines. This makes Yamamoto less centralized and culturally unified than Japan. It also makes Yamamotoans better seafarers!

Technology

Yamamoto is slightly more advanced than Hesket, but not as much as Heskelines (or, for that matter, Yamamotoans) believe. The country's first impression of Hesket -- a continent of dragon-slaying baby-killers -- has given Yamamotoans an errant impression of the barbarism present in the lands to the west. But really, if your first contact with Hesket was the middle of the Caelti rebellion, you'd be hard-pressed not to come off with the same opinion.

Yamamoto's chief advantage is seafaring. Hesket's vessels (and indeed, most of the vessels of mainland Dosan) are inferior, unlikely to survive a transoceanic voyage. The rest of Dosan has only a slight bit of catching up to do, while even Hesket's best (such as the Delonans, Roudoigne and Kjolsns) still have a ways to go. Yamamotoan ships are also sturdier and more agile than their Heskeline counterparts, and the Yamamotoan navy is unparalleled.

Dosan also has a slight edge in magic, too. The more civilized Dosanese (which includes the Yamamotoans) are more advanced in magical research than Hesket is, giving them powers of spells and enchantments that are either beyond the grasp of Heskelines, or at least much harder for Heskelines to accomplish. For instance, Yamamotoan shipboard magical "artillery" (magical items that hurl fire and lightning) have made a mess of Heskeline ships.

Religion

Gods and Paths

Religion in Dosan merges traditional religion with medieval structure, just as we've done with religion in Hesket. There are a number of gods whose powers are known and obvious. But Dosanese priests do not necessarily take a patron god, and may call on whatever god is most appropriate for the situation. Instead, they subscribe to a "path", and each path espouses a different philosophy. Unlike the sects of Christianity or Islam, these different "paths" are generally not hostile to one another. (In this respect, one may compare to the different paths or sects of

Buddhism, or the various movements within Judaism.) See the Religious Paths section for more details.

Note that since the gods can be proven to exist, the gods of Heskete are the gods of Dosan... sort of. Just as Heskete humans and dwarves have the "same" set of gods, so too do Heskete and Dosan. The gods are the same, most theologians will agree, though their interpretations vary.

A good analogy is the story of the blind men who find an elephant. One blind man finds the trunk and declares that an elephant is like a snake. Another finds a leg and says it's like a tree trunk. Another finds an ear, and says it's like a manta ray. In a similar fashion, each culture is reaching the same objective god, but they're touching upon different aspects of that divine being. This all serves to underline the ineffability and mystery of the divine, and leaves theologians and mystics with a lot of room to ponder.

Reincarnation

Unlike in East Asia, reincarnation is not part of Dosanese belief, since reincarnation is a problematic doctrine in a world with the *Resurrect* spell. (For more details, see Appendix B.)

Ancestors

Dosanese do not "worship" their ancestors. The term "ancestor reverence" might be a better way to phrase it. They honor and respect their ancestors, and may make them offerings, but this is not "worship" outright in the same way that a god would be honored. Reverence for one's ancestors is a personal or family matter, meant to maintain the well-being of the family even after each member's death. No Dosanese priest would invoke her grandfather to power a spell!

Dragons

In Heskete, dragons are foul, self-serving creatures who are, for the most part, hated and hunted. Dosanese dragons are very different. They are aloof, non-hostile unless provoked, and are widely respected for their extreme wisdom. They are considered the highest form of being on the mortal plane. This does not make them "divine" per se, but the Yamamotoan discovery that the Cadfainn were attacking a dragon was enough to make the Yamamotoans side with the Caelti, against all other evidence, in 993. The notion that Hesketeines slay dragons will horrify Dosanese until they learn the difference between the two continents' dragons.

Religious Authority

Dosan lacks a central religious authority akin to the Collegium. This is both because it never had a unified, wide-spread empire (like Sturia) from which such an organization could sprout, and because of a general cultural trend towards leaving religious direction in the hands of each individual temple or monastery.

Social Structure

Yamamotoan social structure is not as rigid as the medieval Japanese, just as Hesketeines have a lot more social fluidity than medieval Europeans did. There is no outcast class, although people who work with wastes are still not loved. (Modern-day garbagemen ain't exactly society's crème de la crème, either.) Class restrictions, such as prohibiting non-nobles from carrying swords, are generally not present. (After all, we let Hesketeine freemen anachronistically carry whatever weapons *they* want, too.)

Still, there is a noble class just as in Heskete. Samurai, just like knights, generally come from the upper classes; it is rare for an *ashigaru* foot-soldier to be noble-born.

Language

Yamamotoans speak the same language as everyone else. Chalk this up to the same mysterious trend or force that made all Hesketeines speak the same way. Realistic? Of course not.

Necessary in order to have a Quest world? You bet.

As with Heskentine cultures, however, non-English words exist. In the past we've used words like "jarl" and "emir" for cultural flavor, and we do the same in Dosan. Japanese words like "daimyo", "samurai", "ninja", and "wujen" show up instead of "noble", "knight", "assassin", and "mage." True to Japanese form, these words do not use "-s" for plurals. (All Japanese words are their own plurals. One samurai, many samurai. One wujen, many wujen.)

Note also that Japanese words of three or more syllables are usually pronounced with the stress on the second syllable. It's "hi-RO-shi-ma", in fact, not "HI-ro-SHI-ma".

Japanizations

We also use some "Japanizations" of words to re-emphasize the cultural differences between Heskete and Dosan. For instance, Yamamotoans are prone to Japanizing country names, and thus "Heskete" becomes "Hekete" and "Cadfaigh" becomes "Kadufei". They also add the suffix "-jin" to a country name to denote a resident of that country. Thus Hesketines are "Heketejin" and Cadfainn are "Kadufeijin".

Japanization of words basically involves taking a non-Japanese word and rendering it as best as you can into the limited Japanese syllabary (see Appendix A). Basically, each syllable must be either a vowel or a consonant plus a vowel; the exception is "n", which can be tacked onto the end of any syllable. Thus, you can't say "knife" in Japanese, since it ends in a consonant sound. Instead it becomes "naifu". But you can say "bon-bon". This process yields Japanese terms like "Makudonarudo", an American hamburger chain, or "Arasaka", an American state on the Arctic circle.

Note that since Japanese has no "l", Japanizations usually use "r" instead. Similarly, "v" becomes "b", "th" becomes "t", and so on. For instance, "baseball" becomes "besuboru", and Western romantic love is "robu". While this is technically as legitimate an accent as the bad Scottish accents we use for the Cadfainn, to many Westerners this sounds like mockery. So be sensitive, and use your best judgment about whether it's better to use "Keirudijin" or "Keiludijin" when changing the word "Caelti".

Writing

Obviously, we use the Latin alphabet to represent Dosanese writing. However, we have a convention for imitating Asian script. First of all, there are a number of fonts out there that "look like" Asian characters. (For Windows, "Sumdumgoi" is especially nice; try also some of the ones at <http://www.fontworld.net/comic.html>.) Second, you can try to simulate top-to-bottom writing by making each page very narrow and tall. (Thus, a small note would be thin and long, instead of short and wide.)

Characters

Wujen

"Wujen" is the Yamamotoan word for "mage", and "wujendo" translates to "magery" or "the art of magic."

Wujen are basically the same as Heskentine mages, with the previously noted difference in the underlying principle of their magic. A wujen should pick a particular element as her focus.

Samurai

It is a common misconception that a samurai is a Japanese soldier. This is incorrect. A soldier is an *ashigaru*. A samurai equates to a *knight*, just without the horse-riding that was central to European knighthood. Like knights, samurai are a privileged class, a select group of elite warriors trained in special military skills. Samurai are not dime-a-dozen. Like knights, they are upper-class, with special rights and privileges but also special obligations.

The samurai are the warrior caste of Yamamoto, and have a rather different view of society than everyone else. The status of a samurai is usually hereditary, and samurai are identifiable by their two swords, their skill in battle, and their overweening arrogance. Because there very simply is no one in Yamamoto better than the samurai in a fight or battle, they tend towards overconfidence, as it is not in their world view to accept anyone else as more dangerous than they are.

While their beliefs are completely accepted and respected in Yamamoto, the samurai who come to other countries often have some difficulties integrating themselves into society. For example, though most peasants are a fairly insulting lot, a Heskentine noble (at least, a decent one) would not approve of killing them out of hand just because of this. But if a peasant insults a samurai in Yamamoto, that peasant will die instantly. Other peasants will say only "Boy, I'm glad I kept my big mouth shut," and other samurai will say only "Nice cut."

Any personal insult to a samurai, especially from people the samurai sees as socially inferior, will be taken as an slur upon a samurai's honor, and the only apology possible is the shedding of blood, whether it be an honor duel, a killing, or the offender cuts himself in apology. Personal insults include those to the family, the samurai's sword, the samurai's lord, and anything else that the samurai wants to take offense at, in character.

A samurai who gives his word can always be trusted. This oath is sealed with blood, and with the words "by my blood and honor I so swear." If both blood and this oath are not extracted, the samurai will not consider this oath to be complete, and will reserve the option to break this oath. This is not something that they like to do, and would prefer that the population in general did not know this, so samurai tend to keep their word in general anyway. If a samurai breaks a blood oath, they will commit suicide unless the person to whom they made the oath forces the samurai to make amends in some other way.

If a samurai sees no way to satisfy his honor, he will not be able to live with this shame, and will kill herself in the ritual of *seppuku* (usually misnamed "hari-kari" in the West). This often happens as a result of failing to serve one's lord completely, or making some costly mistake. If a samurai loses an honor duel, they will often commit suicide, unless a third party has influenced the decision, in which case they will take it up again as soon as possible.

Samurai will *always* obey their lord, implicitly, completely, and accurately, to the best of their understanding. They are incapable of lying to their lord, though what they do not know they cannot tell. The natural state of being for a samurai is to have a lord, and samurai feel incomplete and insecure without one. The problem is knowing exactly who is their lord. Samurai have been known to swear loyalty falsely, but this is always because a samurai has been ordered to do so by his lord, with the understanding that when the deception is complete, his lord will allow the samurai to kill himself.

In return for this complete loyalty, honesty, and respect, the lord is expected to provide the

samurai with a retainer, and treat the samurai with loyalty, honesty, and respect in return. If this relationship is not completely mutual, the samurai will no longer see his lord as worthy, and will start looking for one who is.

If a samurai has no lord, he is a ronin. He can usually gain employment from anyone who needs an exceptional swordsman, but will likely feel that any employer who is not samurai is not worthy of true loyalty and respect, and will also have a difficult time respecting himself as a ronin, whether or not he is employed.

Samurai are guided by a code called bushido, or "way of the sword". This code is as central to samurai as the code of chivalry is to knights. The code of bushido that was developed for *Second Stand* is included below. [Note: this is not an officially approved Honor code, and it has not been passed by the Rules Committee or the CG Game World Committee. If you want to take it as a PC, you'll need to get it passed.]

However, please note that while it is recommended, it is not *technically* necessary to take this code to qualify as a samurai. This code represents the ideal, and many individual samurai fall short. In comparison, realize that according to the code of chivalry, all European-style knights should have a code of Honor, either Honesty or Complete Honesty, and either Law-Abiding or Law-Enforcing. Many do, but not all. Just the same, not all samurai live up to bushido. However, samurai who fail to live up to the code, *whether or not* they have purchased it, will be disgraced and risk being stripped of their position.

Samurai "Kit"

- At least 12 weapon points. The character may use no shields and no flails. S/he must be able to use a katana-style weapon. We *do* realize that this restricts samurai to people with personal weapons, but extra work comes with the territory. Having a samurai running around with a broadsword would be jarring. Dirks are acceptable as the secondary shortsword (*wakazashi*).
- Honor (Bushido), worth **-1.5** points total.
- At least one point of Brawling, which represents hand-to-hand martial arts training.
- Any Awareness taken must be of an equal or higher level than any Will taken, and Will must in turn be of an equal or higher level than any Stealth taken.
- A samurai's spiritual training is represented with Mysticism (Paths of Vengeance and the Mystic). Battlecast is recommended, since it lets the spells be cast while still holding the katana.
- Other suggested disadvantages: Courage, Honesty or Complete Honesty, Overconfident, Law-Abiding or Law-Enforcing.
- The character should not have any Natural Limitations.

Bushido

Disads

- Overconfident
- Charity (to lord)

Subtotal: **-1.0**

Other limitations

- Complete Honesty to lord, and must obey lord completely
- Does not feel complete without a lord; must seek one out if the samurai lacks one
- Will demand blood as an apology for all insults
- Blood oath (as defined above)
- If honor cannot be satisfied, will commit *seppuku*

Subtotal: **-.5**

Total: -1.5

As a samurai, one is guardian and ruler of all others in his or her country. One's purpose is to protect these individuals, and to care for them. That they are completely insignificant socially is another contradiction, but the "lower classes" are there to serve and support the samurai in return.

All insults, however slight, must be answered to, and only the most insignificant insult will be satisfied by a mere apology. Usually it is a blood duel or duel to the death that is required to satisfy the samurai's honor.

A samurai *must* obey his or her lord in any and every way possible. The samurai is a tool for the lord to use in any way s/he sees fit, up to and including calling for the death of the samurai and his or her family. Any insult to a samurai's lord is taken as an insult to that samurai, and must be avenged with blood. Any insult that cannot be avenged or answered for will likely require the samurai to kill himself. Likewise, any failure to accomplish a task set for the samurai (set either by himself or especially by his or her lord) will likely require *seppuku*, the suicide ritual.

A samurai gives little thought to death or defeat in battle. In effect, this combines the worst aspects of both Courage and Overconfidence. A samurai will engage almost anyone or anything at any odds whatsoever, and essay only to fight well. Winning or losing is secondary to the fighting itself. And since there is little dishonor in dying, only in giving up, once a fight is undertaken the samurai will be reluctant to give it up, even at the vehement insistence of his or her friends. Obviously, this is not the same as blind stupidity: no samurai, however besotted with his own honor, would take on Gwyn Cailen singlehandedly, with only a sword.

Furthermore, a samurai is an honorable opponent, in the common sense of the word. He is straightforward as he approaches the enemy, and does not dishonor his opponent by stabbing him in the back and so on, in one to one confrontations. He will, however, exploit any weaknesses he can discover, and will discover such weaknesses by any means he can. In larger-scale combat, the samurai is a formidable tactician. In other words, go buy a copy of "the Book of Five Rings" and memorize it.

Money is also of insignificant concern to the samurai, who can range from completely without money to fantastically rich. But they have little awareness of it; the only time they notice money is when they don't have it, on the grand scale. (That is, they want to raise an army and can't pay to feed it). Thus, a samurai must give any amount of money more than ten marks to his lord, as per Charity.

Samurai-Wujen

Just as Hesketh has mage-knights, Yamamoto has its samurai-wujen. Not all wujen are samurai; only such persons who are of the hereditary samurai class who then learn wujendo.

Samurai-wujen do not always carry a sword, but they will still carry a wakazishi, in case they must perform seppuku.

An honor duel between a samurai who does not use magic and one who does can get horrendously complex. These duels involve two or more contests, none of which are intended to be fatal by themselves. Whoever loses the majority of the duels will concede victory, and usually kill themselves.

Ninja

American culture underwent a fascination with ninja around 1980 that has inaccurately glorified their position and reputation. (A certain animated band of turtles didn't help this trend.) To set the record straight, a ninja is, quite simply, an assassin. A hired killer, *with all the negative implications that should imply*. "Ninja" is just Japanese for "assassin"; the word has no other special connotations. And as such, these individuals are despised and hated... even more so in Yamamoto than in Hesket, since backstabbing and contracted murder are considered much more dishonorable among the Yamamotoans.

So walking into a tavern and declaring yourself a ninja is a quick way to get killed. Revealing yourself as a ninja won't earn you admiration for your skills with martial arts -- if that's what you want, just study a martial art; there's no need to shame yourself with dishonorable murder.

Ninja Kit

Ninja may wish to represent their spiritual training via Mysticism, notably the Path of the Protector. The Paths of Vengeance and the Mind are also useful.

Martial Arts

This is just the Brawling skill. Yes, sure, a master of karate can dispose of a Western bar-brawler without a second thought. But a master of karate spends years of hard training -- which in game terms means they've spent more points, which means a higher level of Brawling, which means greater skill at defeating people who have lower levels of Brawling, such as bar-brawlers. (Quest *could* write a really complicated martial arts system -- but the complexity isn't worth it.)

You might also consider taking Mystic, using the Path of Vengeance to represent particular martial-art abilities. If you opt to only cast the spells at touch range, you can use *Stun Grasp* as a disabling strike, *Drop Item* as an attack to disarm, and *Thunderclap* as a takedown strike. The Path of the Protector offers *Strong Grip*, *Trap Resistance* and *Barkskin* at lower levels, which you could interpret as the products of extensive training.

Keep in mind that historically, the martial arts of hand combat were not ends unto themselves. Instead, they were ways of defending yourself *if and only if* you had no weapons! If you have the choice, carry a weapon...

Clergy

Clergy in Dosan don't always pick a specific patron deity as in Hesket. Instead, each priest may call on any of the gods, depending on the situation. Instead, clergy pick from among *paths*, religious groups with a particular philosophical take which influences each cleric's outlook, behavior, and skills. [See the section on Religious Paths later.]

Being Westerners, many players associate the word "mysticism" with Eastern religion. However, in Quest terms, the Mystic skill represents a magical ability through out-of-the-ordinary means. Dosanese priests, however, have magical connections with the gods just as Hesketines do, and so should take the Cleric skill. (So don't let the name "Mystic" mislead you.)

Status

Merchants and money are less prized in Yamamoto than in Hesket. Farmers, who produce the food upon which society depends, are seen as more important than money. To that end, while a wealthy merchant or merchant guildmaster is quite likely to have Status in Hesket, that's going to be rare in Yamamoto. *However*, realize that since our games are in Hesket, it's the reaction of *Hesketines* that count. Wealthy Yamamotoan merchants *should* still purchase Status, but they should realize that their Status cards will have no effect upon other Yamamotoans.

By contrast, sages and scholars are *more* prized in Yamamoto than in Hesketh. Such individuals can expect a greater positive reaction from Yamamotoans.

Languages

When you take Mage or Cleric Initiation or Sage, you gain the ability to read an "ancestral language". For Heskethine humans, this is Sturian. Dosanese characters with these skills, obviously, do not get the ability to read Sturian.

Instead, there is a character set used for "Old Dosanese" writing (the Dosanese refer to this simply as "the old script".) This can only be read by Dosanese characters with the relevant skill(s). However, this character set is unlikely to be used in-game...

Lore (and Sage)

The Lore skill (and Sage) usually represent *local Heskethine* lore, and will be inappropriate for most Dosanese, who would have no good reason to know this information. If your Dosanese PC takes either of these skills, you should be prepared to back this up with a suitable story as to how you learned this lore.

Dosanese Magic

Magic in all of Dosan (not just Yamamoto) works on a different fundamental level than Hesketime magic. (However, please note that in practical, *in-game* terms, the two are the same. This is for convenience, and to avoid having two sets of rules. But the *theory* is different.)

Theory

In Heskete, the Sturians of a millenium ago found a way to combine the various elemental magics (Fire magic, Earth magic, etc.) into one unitary magical force. It is this style of magic that Hesketimes still use today. PC mages don't focus on one elemental force; they simply learn "magic". And this unified magic is much more powerful than any one individual component. This, in part, explains Sturia's victory over the barbarians, who were still learning and using each magic separately.

In Dosan, mages learned to use the various magics in conjunction with each other, but without the individual types of magic losing their identities. The resulting force is more powerful than the elemental magics alone, but Dosanese spells still retain an elemental "flavor". Every Dosanese spell is invoked "I, <name> invoke the elemental power of <element> to cast <spell>." Which spell invokes which element depends on the spell. Spells of movement, for instance, will invoke Air, while spells of destruction invoke Fire.

As a result, Dosanese schools of magic, even after all this time, tend to focus on one of the elements, as do their students. Thus, a Yamamotoan wujen might have studied under a school that emphasized Fire spells, and would be more likely to cast the spells that use Fire. Once again, the rules are no different; the wujen would still be *able* to cast any spell at all. But s/he would *lean* towards casting Fire-related spells..

The (rather goofy) analogy is this. Suppose you have a number of different types of bread dough. You know you'll be healthier if you eat more than one grain. But eating them one at a time isn't efficient. In Sturia, they melded all the dough types together into one big dough of uniform consistency: a multi-grain loaf. But in Yamamoto, they made marble rye: one single loaf, but with the various flavors still evident.

Elements

What are the various magical elements? Sturian magic has four: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. There is a fifth type, "Æther", responsible for meta-magic, but this was not considered an element per se, and it only evolved as a school of magic *after* the Sturians synthesized the elemental magics into unitary magic. (There had been no "school of meta-magic spells" before then.) In Dosan, there are five elements: Air, Earth, Fire, Water, and Jade. Jade is the counterpart to Ætther, and *is* considered a viable element and school unto itself.

Dosanese magical theory centers around balanced elemental forces. To create an Air spell, one creates an *imbalance* of Air. Jade, symbolizing perfection, is the result of the other four being in balance, which is why Jade is the element of counterspells.

The elements and magic forces break down in this manner:

- *Air*: movement. Example: *Blink*, *Camouflage*, *Fling Item*, *Invisibility*, *Thunderclap*.
- *Earth*: protection, fortitude. Examples: *Stoneskin*, *Rootfoot*.
- *Fire*: destruction, heat, light. Examples: *Lightning Bolt*, *Stun Bolt*, *Shatter Limb*.
- *Water*: change, transformation. Examples: nearly all TOW spells, *Hallucination*, *Shrink*.
- *Jade*: countermagic, other spells outside the "norm". Examples: meta-magic, *Memorize*, *Dispel Magic*.

Hajimaru!

At *Voyage of a Fallen Star*, Yamamotoan mages invoked spells not with "Initium!" (bad pseudo-Latin for "begin!") but with "Hajimaru!" (Japanese for "begin!") Technically this is bending the rules, but everyone seemed to get it just fine, especially when the word is proceeded by the

standard phrase "So let it be done."

Critters

This section acts as a supplement to the standard Quest bestiary. In many cases, races are common to both continents, but the monster may have a different name. In other cases, races are unique to one continent or another.

Note that for species unique to Dosan, stats have not been included since none of these monsters have yet appeared in-game!

Hesketine name	Yamamotoan name	description
Ratman	Nezumi	<i>info in the Bestiary</i>
Demon	Oni	<i>info in the Bestiary</i>
Ghost	Shiryo	<i>info in the Bestiary</i>
<i>(none exist in Heskete)</i>	Tengu	winged, clawed creatures who dwell in pine forests. Highly intelligent, kimono-wearing. Can spew flames. A tengu in a good mood may simply scare rather than kill a human.
Orc	Yama hito	<i>info in the Bestiary</i>
Serpentine	Hebinohito	<i>info in the Bestiary</i>

The Kingdoms of Dosan

Information on the rest of Dosan is provided for Yamamotoans to use as background; it would be odd if Yamamotoan characters were unable to provide any information at all about the lands nearby!

However, while we've opened up Yamamoto to CG characters (to provide the CG with a little flavor and variety), the CG GWC wants to maintain the CG's focus on medieval European-inspired cultures in our stories – and so doesn't allow for characters from the other Dosanese countries.

Regions

The western part of the continent is far more advanced than the east. Yamamoto, Meng Guo, Lhagri, Hwangju, and Siradesh are fully medieval lands, with appropriate technology and magic. By contrast, the Ogaans, Zaryabs, and Bukipuanese are backwards and primitive. (And residents of these primitive countries are little encountered in the advanced countries, except as raiders and occasionally as mercenaries.)

Races

Mahiri and dwarves are completely unknown in these lands. In fact, there are very few benevolent non-human races. This tends to make Dosanese less comfortable with mahiri and dwarves, since the Dosanese have come to distrust most non-humans.

"Undiscovered" Regions

Bukipuan is little explored by the advanced countries. It's not worth the trouble, since there's nothing there but jungle (as far as Yamamoto or Meng Guo are concerned). There are probably more Bukipuanese islands off to the south, but who cares.

The lands of the Ogaan and Zaryab tribes are barren steppes, and are also little traveled by the advanced peoples. What lies beyond the eastern steppes is unknown. Once again, why bother?

Rather Crude Map:

(Note that the following map is heavily simplified. Yamamoto, for instance, contains hundreds of smaller islands.)



This is just the western end of the continent. More land lies to the east, but no one knows what's there.

Descriptions of Kingdoms

Bukipuan

(boo-kee-POO-an)

A chain of islands, similar to Indonesia. The residents are backwards by Yamamotoan standards, and few Yamamotoans travel here or know much about it. Why bother? Just a bunch of backwards primitives.

Hwangju

(HWONG-joo)

The kingdom of Hwangju (analogous to Korea) officially proclaims its obedience to the Emperor of Meng Guo. The Mengguonese coerced fealty from Hwangju a century ago, forcing its king to acknowledge the Emperor's authority. The King remains on his throne, but he toes the Imperial line.

The Hwangjuans are renowned for their magical expertise; many of Dosan's greatest magical schools are here. The Empire has taken advantage of this, employing many Hwangjuan mages in its military.

Lhagri

(LAH-gree)

A theocratic state ruled by the clergy of the Kenshin Path. When the current ruler, the Grand Priest/ess, dies, the Lhagrians believe that Nin selects a successor from among the newborn. The clergy then scour the countryside, using a complex and secret method for determining which child has been divinely chosen. When found, s/he is proclaimed the new Grand Priest, who rules until death, when the process repeats.

The core of Lhagri is a mountainous area of land filled with yak herders and farmers, but also vast mineral and magical wealth. Over the last century, Lhagri has been engaged in on-and-off wars with Meng Guo, to much success. Now, vast parts of the fertile southern plain are under Lhagrian control, and the wars continue yet. The current war has been going on since 994 (officially. Border skirmishes began long before.)

Yamamotoans are somewhat wary of Lhagri, but since Yamamoto has some rivalry with Meng Guo, anyone fighting the Mengguonese can't be a bad thing.

Meng Guo

(MENG GWOH)

The "Great Kingdom" of Dosan, Meng Guo controls most of the fertile central plain of the continent. It is ruled by an Emperor, who is the head of a vast and efficient bureaucracy.

Meng Guo considers itself the central kingdom of the world, and demands that other rulers give fealty to the Emperor and the Empire, at least nominally. Hwangju has done so voluntarily, and Khon Dinh by force. Lhagri, however, met this demand with war, which has led to on-and-off wars over the last century. The tide has not gone well for Meng Guo, which has lost much fertile territory to its south. The current war has been (officially) going on since 994.

Of all the other countries of Dosan, Meng Guo receives the most visits by Yamamotoans. Meng Guo is the most pre-eminent land, wealthy, and cultured.

Khon Dinh

(KONN-DINN)

The kingdom of Khon Dinh nominally claims the Emperor of Meng Guo as its Emperor, but this claim is little carried-out in practice. The King of Khon Dinh buckles under this forced allegiance, and seeks to sever his land from Meng Guo's control, minimizing Mengguonese influence at every available opportunity. However, he refrains from outright, provable acts of

rebellion, since he knows his country (and his life) would be crushed.

Siradesh

(SEER-ah-DESH)

Reminiscent of India, Siradesh is an island, separated from the rest of Dosan, which makes it culturally distinct from the rest of the continent. Yamamotoans travel to Siradesh (and vice versa) for trade goods, but understand the country very little.

Siradesh is not a united country but a region, and is ruled by numerous maharajas.

Ogaan lands

(oh-GAHN)

While the Ogaan parallel the Mongols, there is no Golden Horde or other massive organized army. The Ogaan are, however, still a security concern for the western lands, as bands of Ogaan raiders sack caravans and cities. The Ogaan are divided into a number of constantly shifting "khanates".

Yamamoto

(YAH-mah-moh-toh)

An archipelago, Yamamoto has recently become one of the foremost kingdoms of the region. However, expansion (either commercial or military) towards the continent has not proven fruitful. Either the lands there are too strong (such as Meng Guo) or they're not worth it (such as the Ogaan tribesmen). To that end, Yamamoto looked westward in 993, and found Hesketh.

Relations with this new and strange land grew unfortunately strained shortly after first contact. Yamamotoan ships made landfall first in Delona, and then sailed up the coast, eventually visiting Cadfaigh right before the Caelti insurrection of 993. The Yamamotoan visitors understood little of the centuries-old hatred that fed the flames of that war, and when the fighting began, they found themselves dragged into the fight, perhaps unwillingly. The Yamamotoans did not know of the vast differences between the foul Heskethine and noble Dosanese dragons; all they saw was that one side was backed by one of the mighty creatures, and the other sought to kill it. Thus the Yamamotoans sided with the Caelti. Soon, "Princess" Riallonna of the Caelti married one of the daimyo, and as the war turned against her, she and many of her attendants fled with the Yamamotoans back to their homeland.

It was not long after their return that the Yamamotoans learned that the Cadfaighn claims were right. The Caelti were executed promptly, and many of the sailors committed seppuku to try to rectify the disgrace. Still, the sailors' political faction (the White Tigers) found their opponents (the Golden Cranes) capitalizing on the scandal. The Golden Cranes' leader, Ikoma, was soon named military overlord ("Shogun") over the land, and was charged to protect it from the dragon-slaying baby-killing barbarians in the strange lands to the west. While the Emperor remains the official head of state, real power now rests in the figure of the Shogun, who runs the state in the Emperor's name. Many of the daimyo, especially the White Tiger faction, resent this centralization of power and resist the Shogun's rule.

To rally the country and to bring civilization to the Heketejin (Heskethines), Yamamoto invaded Delona, the easternmost part of Hesketh, in July 997.

Zaryab lands

(ZARR-yobb)

Akin to the Uzbeks and other Central Asians, the Zaryab are another people like the Ogaan. However, where the Ogaan are gathered together under various khans, the Zaryab are generally unorganized herders and nomads.

Rulers

Names in red have yet to be filled in. If you really need one, contact the Game World Chair.

Country	Ruler	Notes
Bukipuan	--	pre-Iron Age tribes
Hwangju	King ??	
Khon Dinh	King ??	
Lhagri	Grand Priestess ??	
Meng Guo	Empress Cheng Shi	
Siradesh	--	Ruled by numerous maharajas.
Ogaan lands		Ruled by various shifting khans and warlords.
Yamamoto	Emperor Makoto Shogun Ikoma	No real power; symbolic ruler. Real ruler; trying to centralize power from the daimyo.
Zaryab lands	--	Various scattered tribal leaders.

Terminology

Place	Adjective	Subjects/Residents (plural)	Capital
Bukipuan	Bukipuan	Bukipuanese	--
Hwangju	Hwangjuan	Hwangjuans	??
Khon Dinh	Khondhinese	Khondhinese	??
Lhagri	Lhagrian	Lhagrians	??
Meng Guo	Mengguonese	Mengguonese	??jing
Ogaan lands	Ogaan	Ogaans	--
Siradesh	Siradeshi	Siradeshis	--
Yamamoto	Yamamotoan	Yamamotoans	Kaminoke
Zaryab lands	Zaryab	Zaryabs	--

Cultural Parallels

Country	Parallel
Bukipuan	Western Indonesian (Sumatra, Java)
Hwangju	Korean
Khon Dinh	Indochinese
Lhagri	Tibetan/some of southern China
Meng Guo	North and central China
Siradesh	Indian/South Asian
Ogaan	Mongol
Yamamoto	Japanese

Zaryab	Uzbek/Central Asian
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Religious Paths

Dosanese clergy are often pantheistic, which Heskentine humans may find eerily like mahiri worship.¹ Instead, clergy are members of "paths". These paths are generally non-confrontational with one another, like the various sects of Buddhism or the various movements of Judaism. None consider themselves the "one true" path or seek to out-compete the others. Instead, Dosanese believe that each path is right or wrong for different people, and that you should follow the path that best suits you.

Note: Yamamotoan names for the paths are given below.

Tottatsu ("Standing Straight") - of all the paths, the one most similar to Heskentine worship. It is god-centered and generally evangelical, believing in a happy afterlife for nearly everybody.

Parallel: many sects of Mahayana Buddhism

Kenshin ("Dedication") - though philosophically similar to Tottatsu, Kenshin philosophy believes that it takes hard work, devotion and concentration in order to better one's soul. Most Clerics of this path are monks/nuns, cloistered religious living in communities, isolated to reduce distraction and corruption, and thus making contemplation and devotion easier.

Parallel: some sects of Buddhism, especially Lamaist ones

Dairokkan ("Intuition") - a philosophy espousing intuition and meditation as a method of self-improvement. Clergy of this path are generally perceived as being calm, inward-focused, and centered.

Parallel: Zen Buddhism

Guyuu ("Preparedness") - a path espousing physical and corporeal readiness, self-protection, and self-reliance as the route to happiness and enlightenment. Physical readiness soon led to magical readiness as well, and thus path focuses the strongest on offense and combat magic. Clergy of this path are generally warrior-monks.

Parallel: Shaolin Buddhism

Kawazoi ("Along the River") - a path espousing simplicity of living. Followers believe in yielding to the "River of Life", a metaphor for the guiding principle of the universe which brings about change. By living in harmony with the River, by accepting change and working with the natural flow of life, followers find happiness.

Parallel: Taoism

Wulinism - priests of this path follow the dictates of the Mengguonese philosopher Wu Lin, who taught that loyalty and family piety are the highest virtues, and that the goal of mortal life is an ordered society.

Parallel: Confucianism, Moism

¹ Siradesh would presumably be more like Heskent, with patron gods instead of paths. But we're not about to have Siradeshi PCs, so we're not going to bother working out any of that here.

The Pantheon

Type	Hesketine Name	Yamamotoan Name
Overgod, Justice	Nen	Nin
Blacksmiths, Crafts	Furthane	Faruchan
Death, Afterlife	Tralados	Tsurazo
Fate, Fortune	Balthazar	Buratsu
Healing, Peace	Majenir	Mashinara
Family, Filial Piety	Perinnia	Iniyu
Hunt	Tiranon	Tiruju
Love, Fertility	Alia	Aniyo
Luck	Kintaka	Kitoku
Murder, Deception	Kahla-ran	Kiyoran
Music, Poetry	Sarana	Seiran
Nature, Agriculture	Ubrialla	Biyan
Sea, Water	Kyta	Kaito
Sun, Light	Brinnig	Birin
War, Victory	Rannash	Ranatsu
Weather, Storms	Zotra	Zairota
Wine, Revelry, Mischief	Dorial	Dohansho
Wisdom, Scholarship	Elune	Enno

Pantheon Descriptions

NIN - Nen is still the chief of the gods, but is dual-gendered rather than genderless. It has two faces, one male and one female. Nin is the "Emperor of Heaven", the head of the divine hierarchy.

ANIYO (ah-NEE-yo) - Yamamoto has a much more comfortable attitude toward sexuality. Rather than being a coquette of dubious reputation, Alia is a respected goddess of love and romance.

BIRIN (BEE-rin) - the god of the gun

BIYAN (BEE-yahn) - the goddess of the home

BURATSU (boo-RAHT-soo) - the goddess of fate

DOHANSHO (doh-HAHN-shoh) - public drunkenness is less tolerated; it is considered shameful. As a result, Dorial has a worse reputation. Because of this he is also the god of mischief (not Kintaka).

ENNO - the many-eyed Enno is the goddess of scholars, bureaucrats, and other literate types.

FARUCHAN (fah-ROO-chahn) – the god of crafts is mostly the same as in Hesketh.

INIYU (ee-NEE-yoo) - goddess of the home, Piyana also takes on the very important aspects of family, filial piety, and reverence for one's ancestors. This gives her more prestige than in Hesketh.

KAITO (KIGH-toh) - the sea-goddess is mostly unchanged.

KITOKU (kee-TOH-koo) - rather than being a disreputable prankster, Kitoku is the much-loved god of luck. Merchants and common folk invoke his name rather frequently for small boons and good business deals. He is one of the more popular gods.

KIYORAN (kee-YOH-raham) - in addition to being the goddess of murder that she is in Hesketh, Kiyoran is also the goddess of intrigue and deception, making her the patron deity of assassins (ninja) even more so than in the lands to the west. This makes her reputation even worse, and she is even less tolerated in Yamamoto than in Hesketh.

MASHINARA (mah-SHEE-nah-rah) - the goddess of healing

RANATSU (rah-NAHT-soo) - the god of war

SEIRAN (SAY-rah) - the goddess of song

TIRUJU (tee-ROO-joo) - the god of the hunt

TSURAZO (tsoo-RAH-zoh) - the god of death

ZAIROTA (zigh-ROH-tah) - while Heskethines pray to Zotra for beneficial rains, Dosanese view Zotra as a feared god, whose quick temper and unpredictable nature sends violent storms crashing against Dosanese coasts. Offerings are made to him more to placate than to revere.

Meng Guo

Note: the GWC does not want to water down the significance of Yamamoto by flooding Quest games with Mengguonese. Therefore, **you will need approval to use any Mengguonese, either as PCs or as NPCs.**

In 2003, sailors from Tamplonia braved the ocean storms and a hostile Yamamotoan navy, and sailed to Dosan, landing in Meng Guo. Meng Guo opened relations with this strange foreign land. Neither Tamplonia nor Meng Guo have reliable naval technology, so they won't be regularly sending ships across the dangerous ocean, as the Yamamotoans are able to do. But the two can offer occasional voyages.

Just as Yamamoto is to Japan, Meng Guo is to China. When developing Meng Guo, you should diverge from Chinese history only as necessary. This will make it easier for others to create a consistent picture.

Technology

Technologically, the Mengguonese are not as advanced in long-range seafaring as the Yamamotoans. This is in part because Yamamoto is an archipelago and its residents need ships to reach one another; and in part because Meng Guo sees itself as the center of the world, and other people are supposed to come to it, not it to them.

Otherwise, the Mengguonese are about as advanced as Yamamoto, which means they are slightly more advanced than Hesketh but think they're far more advanced than Hesketh.

Government

Empress Cheng Shi rules the country, having the mandate of the heavens. As long as the Empress holds the mandate of the heavens, none would dream of rising against her. However, in past times of famine or poor government, the people have been known to decide that their ruler has lost the mandate of the heavens, and thus that it is their duty to overthrow a clearly corrupt reign.

Beneath her there are landed nobles, but the real power lies with the vast imperial bureaucracy. An extensive examination system culls the cream of the crop to provide candidates for magistrate and governor positions. In reality, "the cream of the crop" is actually the cream of those who can afford schooling, which usually means the wealthy merchant and noble families. That said, there is more social mobility than in Hesketh, and there are many oft-repeated instances of poor farmers using all their spare time to study, taking the exams, and rising to high position. The Mengguonese pride themselves on being a meritocracy, since anyone, even the lowest peasant, who does well in the Imperial Exams may become a high official. Similarly, in the army, anyone of any social class can rise to the highest ranks, though the children of nobles often start with a marked advantage.

Culture

Family is important, as is the extended family (the clan). Mengguonese culture values respect, tradition, and obedience (children to elders, everyone to the state).

Meng Guo is a multinational empire; there are cultural differences between the various regions of the empire. The imperial bureaucracy rotates its governors and magistrates to increase a sense of connection within the Empire.

Foreign Relations

Meng Guo means "the Great Kingdom", and they believe it. They perceive themselves at the center of the world, the most advanced land and the only one that really matters. (The

Mengguonese believe that all the important cultural and technological achievements in Dosan originated in Meng Guo.) The Mengguonese expect other nations and peoples to pay their kingdom respect and send it tribute. Currently the lands of Khon Dinh and Hwangju are aligned with Meng Guo as vassal states. Meng Guo would like to bring Yamamoto under its heel, but that would involve building an expensive navy.

Lhagri, the land to the southeast, is far more troublesome. When Lhagri refused to pay tribute several decades ago, the Mengguonese sent their armies into the mountains... and were repulsed. The Lhaghrians soon built a vast army and sent the battle into Mengguonese lands, seizing some of the southern territories. Mengguo and Lhagri began another war in 994; there was no official treaty to end it, but it essentially petered out by 1000. There is still an uneasy peace along the border, with the Lhaghrians still craving revenge and the Mengguonese still hoping to regain their lost provinces.

Meng Guo knows only a little about Hesketo so far, mostly filtered through Yamamotoan or Tamplonian eyes. Meng Guo perceives most of Hesketo as barbaric and chaotic, but recognizes that Tamplonia has a vast bureaucracy of priests who worship the god of knowledge – how enlightened! As far as the Mengguonese are concerned, the Tamplonians are a pocket of wisdom in a vast sea of ignorance, and will not recognize relations with the other Hesketine lands. Other Hesketine countries' ships will not be welcome in Mengguonese ports, and Mengguonese ships will only sail to Tamplonia.

The Tamplonians were not willing to offer “tribute” per se and acknowledge Meng Guo's supremacy, but they did offer “gifts” and make substantial diplomatic overtures. Meng Guo seems to have had its ego satisfied, and Tamplonia didn't have to humble itself too greatly, so both sides seem content.

Characters

Most of the Characters information listed for Yamamoto applies here, with a few exceptions:

- Meng Guo has a landed class of warriors, but they don't have a central code of honor the way the Yamamotoans have samurai bushido.
- Meng Guo has assassins and mages, but they obviously don't use the terms “ninja” or “wujen”.

Religion in Meng Guo

For the most part, the Yamamotoan religion section applies here, just with different names. However, note that the ongoing rivalry with Lhagri has made Kenshin less popular, especially among the politically astute.

The Mengguonese have also applied their sense of strict order to their religion, and view the gods as a huge Celestial Bureaucracy, with Ning (Nen) as the god regulating the affairs of all gods, and the various other gods as administrators of all things under their portfolio. Thus Fur-dan (Furthane) is the god in charge of the forge, who also oversees the spirit in charge of fire, the spirit in charge of smelting, etc., as well as the spirits of each individual forge.

Paths

meaning	Yamamotoan	Mengguonese
Standing Straight	Tottatsu	
Dedication	Kenshin	
Intuition	Dairokan	
Preparedness	Guyuu	Gai

Along the River	Kawazoi	
Wulinism	Wulinism	Wulinism

Gods

Hesketine	Yamamotoan	Mengguones e
Nen	Nin	Ning
Furthane	Faruchan	Fur-dan
Tralados	Tsurazo	Dailo
Balthazar	Buratsu	Bai-mao
Majenir	Mashinara	
Perinnia	Iniyu	
Tiranon	Tiruju	
Alia	Aniyo	
Kintaka	Kitoku	
Kahla-ran	Kiyoran	
Sarana	Seiran	
Ubrialla	Biyan	
Kyta	Kaito	
Brinnig	Birin	
Rannash	Ranatsu	
Zotra	Zairota	
Dorial	Dohansho	
Elune	Enno	

Appendices

Appendix A: Japanese Syllabary

The following are the various *katakana*, rendered in the Latin alphabet:

a	i	u	e	o					
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	ga	gi	gu	ge	go
sa	si	su	se	so	za	zi	zu	ze	zo
ta	chi	tsu	te	to	da	ji	zu	de	do
na	ni	nu	ne	no	ha	hi	fu	he	ho
ba	bi	bu	be	bo	pa	pi	pu	pe	po
ma	mi	mu	me	mo					
ya		yu		yo					
ra	ri	ru	re	ro					
wa									
kya		kyu		kyo	gya		gyu		gyo
sha		shu		sho	ja		ju		jo
cha		chu		cho					
nya		nyu		nyo	hya		hyu		hyo
bya		byu		byo	pya		pyu		pyo
mya		myu		myo					
rya		ryu		ryo					
n									

Appendix B: Explaining Difference - Designers' Notes

Players who have studied Asian culture may find some significant differences when looking at Dosan, and may ask, "Why did this get changed? Why didn't you just use the historical element?" What one needs to remember is that just as European culture was modified to make Hesketh, so Asian culture has undergone similar changes:

Magic

In medieval Europe, magic was feared. Sorcerors and witches were believed to have entered into pacts with infernal forces in order to wield their power. But in Hesketh, magic is accepted. Magery is a craft like any other -- a powerful craft for certain, but with no taint about it.

The same is true of Asia and Dosan. Magic, feared on Earth for its corrupting qualities, is fully accepted in Dosan. Wujen are not believed to wield an inherently corrupting force, as they were in Japan.

Society

The Dosanese social structure is much more flexible than Asian culture was in the Middle Ages. The rigid caste or class systems, while not totally absent, allow much more rise and fall than their Earthly counterparts.

This parallels the changes between Europe and Hesketh. Hesketh allows considerably more social fluidity than Europe did. Freeman PCs are invited to nobles' feasts, can carry any weapon, can rise to high positions within the church and the guilds, etc. None of this was true in medieval Europe.

Religion

This one needs the most explanation...

Hesket's cosmologies better represent the religion of very early Europe than they do the religion of medieval or even Roman times. In the period from 800 to 200 BCE, most of the world's religions developed redemptive philosophies that provided comfort to worshippers, and these philosophies became the focus of those religions -- taking precedence over the tales of the gods' exploits. Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and even the Greeks transcended their earlier faiths in this way.

But this is not true in Hesket, where people don't need a redemptive philosophy to appreciate the divine -- with priestly magic, the divine is quite prominent! One's eyes and ears provide evidence of the divine in a way that no mere philosophy can. It is obvious that the gods of Hesket are apparent and active, since nearly every priest can channel divine power into healing magic. Thus, in Hesketine religion, the gods themselves and their tales are still what are important. This is more like the Greece of Homer than the Greece of St. Paul. However, Hesket blends this earlier-age cosmology with complex, modern theology (as befits a medieval setting).

This change is just as true in Dosan as in Hesket. Dosanese religion lacks the philosophical changes that occurred through Buddhism and the *Vedanta* of Hinduism. Instead, Dosanese cosmology more closely resembles that of the traditional, pre-Buddhist religions of the region. As with Europe/Hesket, the gods themselves take center stage, not the redemptive philosophies.

Moreover, just as we modified European religion to better fit a fantasy setting, so too did we modify Asian worship. Spells like *Resurrection* are quite at odds with a theory of reincarnation! (How can you resurrect a soul if it's in a new body?) Since we've already established that resurrection works, reincarnation had to be cut. Or rather, we had to revert to early Asian worship, before the Buddhists spread the Hindu idea of a reincarnation cycle.

Lastly, it is worth noting that ancient East Asian and European religion are more alike than modern Asian and European worship are. Ancient Chinese and Norse religion have more in common than Zen Buddhism and Lutheran Christianity do. Therefore, Dosanese religion will be easier for our players (who are usually more accustomed to Western religion) to learn. If our goal is to educate, we have to remember that we need to make it easier for our players to learn, and that we can't just throw the whole of Eastern religion at them at once. Traditional polytheisms are easier to pick up than complex Buddhist philosophy!

Kami

And what happened to the Japanese kami? Well, for one, the use of that term is very specific to a religion that is still practiced in the real world (that is, Shinto), so there are problems with Quest's religious policy. Ergo, we've dropped it.

Second, "kami" is a term embracing all manner of otherworldly creatures. In the Quest world, players have proof that there are gods, and that the other forms of spirits (such as fae and djinni) are not divine. This fact doesn't fit mix at all with the notion of kami. To that end, the notion of "gods" in Japan has taken more of a center stage in Yamamotoan religion. Forest spirits and water spirits and so forth may still exist, but they are not worshipped and are not invoked in clerical spells -- no more than a Hesketine is going to worship the fae. Yamamotoan clergy call only upon the pantheon proper.