

JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 11/25/2012

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Bruce is very excited! Not only does he have a nice, home-made knitted dice bag, he's also got a very cool knit hat! *Georgina* is equally excited because she made the bag and the hat.

Chris observes, "That hat makes you look like a hipster douchebag."

Paul corrects him, "Actually, he looks a lot more like a cancer patient. Though it might be that 'hipster douche' is a highly sought-after look at TI."

Matt comes in to the middle of the discussion. He elects to remain silent. *Patrick* follows his lead...

Ernest and *Tim* decide to skip the experience entirely in favor of hitting the Ren Faire. Ren Faire in November! Freeze and get filthy, all at once! Surely plague cannot be far behind!

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Harwynian Falingleaf	Bruce	Elegant Elven Transmuter	11
Yoshihiro Kaijitsu	Ernest	Tien Cavalier/Samurai-In-Training	11
Jacob Frostfang	Matt	Cold-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer	11
V'lk	Chris	Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle)	2/9
Gobo Samarillian	Patrick	Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller	11
Bjorn the Unlucky	Tim	Ulfen Woodsman	11

ENTER THE DRUID

Last time, the characters slaughtered 90% of Gangasum's bandit gang before the villains even woke. Before the characters have had any chance to celebrate their victory a young Tianmin man with a long, dark beard accompanied by a weretiger strides into the hall. The man wears lamellar armor and carries a wooden shield and a scimitar. The characters gasp, "He's a druid! An *evil* druid!"

Jacob Frostfang doesn't even have a chance to move before the weretiger rushes him, claws him and bites him. He does make a very impressive Fortitude save, which may help him not change sides later on.

Harwynian casts *Haste* on everyone except *Gobo*, then takes advantage of his improved move speed to get clear of the scary weretiger. The druid responds by casting *Fire Shield* on himself. He is surrounded by bright orange flames!

It is at this point that the characters start wondering what happened to *Yoshihiro* and *Bjorn*. Nobody has a good immediate explanation. They come up with several bad explanations, most of them revolving around various embarrassing personal issues.

V'lk decides that lack of a silver blade is not a reason to avoid the weretiger. He slashes and stabs with sword and dagger, along the way poisoning the weretiger with *shadow essence*. The creature barely even notices the venom. Or the attacks – it is at most lightly wounded.

Jacob, close-pressed by the weretiger, invokes his *Snow Shroud*, surrounding himself with a blinding, icy whirlwind. *V'lk* and *Harwynian* both appreciate the elegance and beauty of his defense. The weretiger does not: it launches at him with claws extended. It is not dissuaded by the cold, leaving *Jacob* bloody and broken but still standing (barely). The cold effects of *Jacob's* shield leave the tiger almost frozen solid. *Harwynian* shoots it through the head with a *Scorching Ray*, ending it. The weretiger's body changes back into that of a small, heavily tattooed Tien woman.

The evil druid decides that discretion is the best path. He changes into an eagle and flies away. *V'lk* and *Gobo* spend their time healing *Jacob*.

WHAT JUST ATTACKED US?

Yoshihiro's sword *Suishen* is able to recognize the dead woman as an *utare*, a group of tribal people who are a minority within Minkai. She is carrying an *Amulet of Natural Armor +2*, at least according to *Jacob*. *V'lk* is unsure that the human knows enough to be able to identify magic when he sees it. The bandit chief from last session had more items:

- *Potion of Cure Serious Wounds*
- *Armor of the Tireless Warrior*, +3 *Leather* armor made from strips of horsehide that has a variety of special powers when worn by a barbarian.

- *Light Wooden Shield* +2
- *Scimitar* +2
- *Composite Shortbow (+3 STR)* +2
- *Belt of Incredible Dexterity* +2
- A ring of ironwood keys

Jacob claims the armor. Harwynian picks up the *Belt of Incredible Dexterity*, noting that with it he will be able to shift his class stat enhancement points to something other than DEX. Gobo wins a contest with V'lk for the *Amulet of Natural Armor*.

RANSACKING THE KITCHEN

The characters search around for additional bandits, or additional loot. They move into the kitchen, an area dominated by a large pinewood table. V'lk goes back upstairs to check the dead bandits for magical goods. He finds:

- *Breastplate* +2
- *Light Wooden Shield* +1
- *Scimitar* +1
- *Composite Shortbow (+3 STR)* +1
- 20 arrows and 5 whistling arrows

A dry, well-ventilated storeroom proves to contain a variety of useful items, including hay, boxes of rice, bags of millet, and a pile of firewood.

GANGASUMI'S PERSONAL QUARTERS

The characters pass through the hanging curtain to find a richly-appointed area decorated with painted ricepaper screens, a spherical hanging brazier, a fine rug, a low beg and a carved chest. V'lk tests the chest for traps, finds none, and opens it. He finds:

- A golden plaque in the shape of a deer head with emerald eyes (400 gold);
- A cloak of white fox fur (300 gold);
- A pouch containing 150 gold pieces

Harwynian is easily able to determine that most of the other items in the room are quite valuable. The others press one item after another into Harwynian's hands so he can appraise them. "Yes, V'lk. That is a sandal."

THE HIDDEN ARMORY

The characters go through a door. The door leads to a hall. The hall leads to another room. The characters find an ancient shrine to *Shizeru*, the Tien goddess of ancestors and honor. The shrine appears to have been robbed long ago – there are blank spaces on the walls where valuable plaques and decorations have been removed. Small cartouches on the walls contain the names of samurai and expressions of thanks written in Minkaian. There is one cartouche reading, “Empress of Heaven, Touch Me with your Grace!” The characters touch that with the Royal Seal. This causes a pit to open in the center of the chamber, revealing a hidden armory with various masterwork weapons. The armory also includes an *Adamantine Katana +1* and a *Helm of Underwater Action* (kabuto).

The characters explore the remaining portions of the fortress. They find no serious opposition, some vials of sake, and the (separate) sleeping arrangements of the weretiger and the evil druid. In the common area they find seven peasant girls who had been captured by the bandits and held as servants. V’lk hands one of the captured bandits over to them and is disappointed to see that they are so intimidated that they are unwilling to kill him. V’lk shows them how by scalping the bandit in front of them. This does not improve their sense of courage.

THE BANDIT THREAT IS ENDED

The characters return to the rebel leader *Hiraboshi Jiro* to describe the fate of *Gangasum*. He tells them that his men managed to ambush and destroy another group of bandits, and that the bandit threat to the area is ended. With the threat gone, he is now willing to pledge his assistance to the characters in their efforts to restore the true throne of Minkai.

Hiraboshi Jiro moves his group to the fortress of *Seinaru Heikiko* and formally swears his service and that of his men to the characters’ efforts. He is so happy to get back his ancestral sword that he gives them a *Daikyu of Commanding Presence*, a Minkaian longbow made from bamboo, wood and leather with a grip crafted from the hide of an imperial dragon.

Jiro reports that the Jade Regent is massing troops to defend the legitimacy of his claim. This has alienated all other nations, causing a trade crisis. The daimyo are unhappy because they are required to pay to support the military buildup. Likewise the common people are suffering under the burden of the heavy taxes levied by the daimyos. Jiro advises sparking a rebellion in three Northern provinces. He feels that discontent is high enough and the time is right.

One important variable is the allegiance of the ninja clans and the underworld. Their loyalty goes with their treasuries – if the characters can draw them away from the regent their powers and resources would be quite valuable. If they cannot, then their efforts will be an ongoing problem.

The geisha in *Sakakabe* the *Hirokyomi* teahouse is the most influential center of the North. The geisha there will know secrets that can be used to sway the allegiance of the merchants. The owner is a skilled geisha named *Okohaku*, the daughter of the former governor. A key regional backer of the Jade Regent is *Sikutsu Senaka*, the new governor of Engenoka, an important port town (at least until the Regent had the taxes increased and effectively closed the ports). He is cruel, efficient and powerful. He has suppressed dissent through executions and crackdowns.

DAIKYU OF COMMANDING PRESENCE

Source [Pathfinder #53: Tide of Honor pg. 60](#)

Aura strong evocation CL 12th

Slot none; **Price** 26,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

This asymmetric Minkai longbow, or *daikyu*, is over 6 feet long, and made of laminated bamboo, wood, and leather with a grip crafted from the hide of an imperial dragon. The *daikyu of commanding presence* is a +2 *seeking composite longbow* that adjusts its strength rating to match the Strength bonus of its wielder. Once per day, the wielder of the *daikyu of commanding presence* can fire a single arrow into the air, which illuminates the surrounding area with the effects of a *daylight* spell for 1d6 rounds. All allies within the *daylight* spell's area of increased illumination (120 feet) receive a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear and a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls made as part of a charge, for the duration of the daylight effect. If the wielder of the *daikyu of commanding presence* is a cavalier or samurai, this *daylight* effect counts as a banner for

the purpose of the character's banner ability, and the morale bonuses are treated as for a cavalier or samurai of five levels higher. In addition, a cavalier or samurai wielding the *daikyu of commanding presence* can use his challenge ability against a foe within the first range increment of the bow, and deals extra damage to the target of his challenge with arrows fired from the bow.

The *daikyu of commanding presence* is an ancestral weapon of the Higashiyama family, one of the five imperial families of Minkai. The daikyu is imbued with royal honor, and bestows one permanent negative level on any creature without honor who attempts to wield it (such as oni, traitors, kinslayers, and the like). The negative level remains as long as the weapon is in hand and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level cannot be overcome in any way (including by restoration spells) while the weapon is wielded.

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bull's strength*, *daylight*, *heroism*, *true seeing*; **Price** 13,200 gp

THE SAKAKABE TEAHOUSE

The characters decide to visit the Hirokyomi teahouse to speak to people upset with the governor. They decide that having an expensive gift would be a good way to impress Okohaku, and settle upon the white fox cloak.

The characters and their caravan head out towards Sakakabe. They decide to take a shortcut through the forest, trusting that their earlier arrangements with the kami will continue to protect them. Nothing attacks them, demonstrating the worth of the arrangement.

Sakakabe is constructed on a rise overlooking a treacherous coastline. On the way, the characters stop at *Shirio Onsen*, a former hunting lodge surrounded by a stout palisade that has been turned into a way-house. The courtyard around the lodge is a whirl of activity, including artisans making local crafts and lumberjacks from the surrounding hinterlands preparing for their work. A gang of workmen is constructing a channel from the river into the palisade to supply fresh water. Shirio Onsen is constructed on top of a hot springs, and has always had a plentiful supply of hot water. Oddly for a way-house, it

has no interior kitchen, just a section of the courtyard with a firepit. It also features a very nice teahouse with a place for quiet contemplation.

The characters decide to stay at Shirio Onsen for several days to learn the tea ceremony and contemplate the cherry blossoms in the garden. Harwynian in particular is eager to perfect his tea ceremony skills. He spends a lot of time meditating with *Drusisique*. The others spend a lot of time mocking Harwynian behind his back. As per usual.

ENTRY INTO SAKAKABE

Sakakabe is built into a series of terraces on a harsh shoreline. The main business of the city is trading silver and pearls. There are silver mines in the nearby mountains and villages who dive for pearls along the coastline. These two trades have made the city rich and allowed the construction of many elegant temples, influential teahouses and exquisite theaters. There are also many local gambling houses, operating with conspicuous disinterest from local law enforcement.

The Hirokyomi teahouse is located on the Way of the Songbirds. The entry to the Way is protected by guards intent upon excluding undesirable types. Given local xenophobia, the characters decide that it would be best if they did not look too much like foreigners. This is easy for Harwynian (who is always elegant) and V'lk (who is an elf, after all). It is quite difficult for the tall, flaxen-haired Jacob, who stands out rather badly. V'lk applies his Disguise skills on Gobo and Jacob with great energy. Jacob ends up black-haired. Each of the characters purchases extremely expensive clothing in the local style – Harwynian in particular spends 100 gold to purchase two sets of very good clothing. The group nominates Gobo to be the spokesperson, with Jacob as his bodyguard and the others as aides and associates.

With these preparations, getting past the guards is not a problem.

THE TEAHOUSE

The characters are greeted by a young and enthusiastic maiko (apprentice geisha). She leads them to a private room where servants provide tea. She asks if they would like a finer tea; this provides an opening for Harwynian to explain the finer points of selecting tea. Gobo lets him “explain” for 10 minutes, then makes his selection without

consideration of anything Harwynian said. Gobo indicates that the characters wish Okohaku to serve as hostess, and that they bring gifts for her.

The maiko leaves, then returns and asks the characters to accompany her. She takes them to a small inner garden. There are visible guards posted in the corners. Okohaku approaches and sits at the table. She begins the ceremony, expressing her joy at such generous gifts from strangers to the land.

Gobo outlines the characters' goal to bring the Amatatsu heir back to the Jade Throne. Okohaku demurs, noting that it will be very hard for outlanders with no connections to gather support to overthrow the Jade Regent. Besides, it would be disloyal for her even to speak of opposing the Jade Regent. And even if an Amatatsu heir were to reappear, it would take substantial bona fides to prove their identity.

Okohaku notes that one of her most adored geishas has gone missing. *Osayumi* was a favorite with many of the local lords. She recently agreed to entertain a pearl merchant name *Yugureda Shosaito*. She traveled to his private island for a week-long stay. Yugureda claims that she never arrived. He had repeatedly requested her presence, and seemed to be driven by obsession – she had often declined his offers, but accepted a month ago. She traveled to his house *Shizunoea* on his personal barge.

It is clear that the characters must return Osayumi to prove themselves to Okohaku.

Gobo speaks to one of the other geishas about Osayumi. He learns that she has a magical samisen and is masterful in its use. She played alone in her rooms for hours, entering a deep trance while she did. Sometimes she displayed abnormal, unnatural knowledge of the past after she emerged from a trance. And she left a message with one of her students with instructions to give it to someone honorable if she ever went missing. The characters read the message - it is a poem.

I must discover
what lies inside of myself
to enter your place
through dark and shadowed gates, but
the reflection is not me.

None of them understand the symbolism. The rest of the message is a small wooden box made in several pieces and sealed with a netsuke. The characters (eventually) open the four components of the box, finding:

- An empty silk cocoon
- A yellow ring of calcite
- A blue ring of lapis lazuli
- 3 camphor beads on cord
- 6-petaled magnolia tree

None of these things mean anything to the characters. The geisha believes that because Osayumi could predict the future the items will serve as clues to finding her.

The characters make their plans to travel to Shizunoea late at night, completely unaware that as they confer Harwynian is off in a private room being bathed, perfumed, and entertained. By the time he emerges the next morning he smells like flowers, his hair shines with silky luster, his clothing is flawlessly arranged, and he is surrounded by geishas hanging upon his every word.

Additional investigation determines that the six-petaled magnolia tree is at a lagoon down the coast. A kappa lives there and might be able to help. This is also where the dock for the trip to Shizunoea is located. The characters depart for the lagoon, accompanied by the one outspoken geisha and *Shalelu Andosana*.

THE KAPPA'S LAGOON

The lagoon is an evil-looking place. The characters are easily able to see the dock and the six-petaled magnolia. The geisha warns the characters that kappa are very shy – they will not emerge for just anyone. Gobo turns down Harwynian's offer to lure it out with beautiful calligraphy – the characters brought cucumbers and horsemeat for the purpose, as they love food.

The geisha throws the food into the river. Soon enough a creature with a wizened face and a turtle shell emerges. He leans on a wooden staff, but seems quite animated. "Greetings, visitors! Thank you for remembering an old, useless turtle and bringing food to keep his bones warm."

Gobo explains the problem of Osayumi's disappearance. The kappa indicates that he will help to rescue his "niece." He invites the characters into his home (a semi-submerged cave) for tea. Swamp tea. He explains that her parents were killed many years ago, and he raised her and taught her many ancient secrets and skills. Then he took her to a monastery orphanage, where she learned the samisen. After she left the monastery she went into the profession of the geisha.

The kappa knows that the pearl merchant is a powerful wizard and a shogi master. He may be the same wizard who killed Osayumi's mother.

Upon learning that Gobo can play shogi (sort of), the kappa challenges him to a game. The kappa wins (of course), but is impressed enough with Gobo's spirit that he offers him a magical shogi piece that can guide him when playing the game.

THE PEARL MERCHANT'S ISLAND

The characters approach the dock on the northern shore of the lagoon. Nobody is there, but there is a large pole-propelled raft tied up. The characters take the raft and head towards the island. Harwynian changes into a sea-bird and flies ahead to reconnoiter. He returns and uses his impressive calligraphy skills to draw a map. When Gobo notices that Harwynian has finished the map and has moved on to illuminate and decorate the margins he grabs the parchment and yanks it away from the elf. Nobody else complains, though it looks like V'lk's nascent sense of aesthetics might be tweaking him just a bit.

The characters approach the docks and the barge tied up to it. As they get closer, the eight hobgoblin sentries emerge. The hobgoblins note that their only ranged weapons are javelins, so they take cover and cast buff spells. V'lk and Harwynian use *Shadow Jump* and *Dimension Door* respectively to bring the characters right on top of them.

From much closer up it is clear that the hobgoblins are actually *ja noi*, hobgoblin oni. Shalelu sends three arrows into one of them, critically injuring it. Her hatred of goblinoids stands her in very good stead. Gobo follows up with a barrage of shooting stars, burning several of them. Noting that they seem to hate fire, Jacob engulfs the barge in a *Fireball*. He roasts one of them and leaves four more smoldering.

Then the ja noi rush the characters, demonstrating that they have the power of flight. V'lk takes a serious hit from one of them and manages only an off-balance riposte. Harwynian, bleeding from a ja noi spear strike, sends a persistent *Slow* at the creatures. He is gratified to see that all of them are moving quite glacially.

Shalelu continues to fill ja noi with arrows, inflicting a light wound on one and taking down another. Gobo knocks a ja noi in front of him down with a *Color Spray*. Jacob engulfs two in *Dragon's Breath* while V'lk continues to chop and cut. Harwynian takes another serious hit, so he casts *Blink* to address the situation.

Gobo notes that the entire group is in very bad shape. He casts *Mass Cure Light Wounds* to help out. Jacob's next *Dragon's Breath* downs all but three of the ja noi. The surviving ja noi fly back to the barge and make ready to escape. V'lk turns *Invisible* and pursues. Harwynian lands an *Ice Storm* on the retreating barge, Shalelu peppers it with arrows and Jacob launches a *Fireball* at it. All of this fails to stop the remaining ja noi.

The ja noi conclude that trying to take the barge is a failed plan – they fly away. Harwynian *Disintegrates* one. Shalelu shoots another one down. The last one plunges out of sight underwater and hides.

THE END OF THE SESSION

The characters reassemble at the docks of Yugureda Shosaito's island, binding their wounds and preparing to assault the main house.